THE HEIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN DEVOTION

DOREMUS A. HAYES

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THE HEIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN DEVOTION

A Study of the Lord's Prayer

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TO
COMMISSIONER
SAMUEL LOGAN BRENGLE
A MAN OF PRAYER

FOREWORD

THIS book is a Study, but a devotional study. It represents rather extended reading of the literature in this field and we trust that it is based upon sound scholarship, but its primary aim is to be an aid to the devotional life. We began the series with THE HEIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE, getting the suggestion for the title from the climbing of the mountain trails in Yosemite. That volume was followed by THE HEIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY, and the title was suggested by the many pilgrim paths leading to the summit of Fujiyama. The other three volumes have been expository and devotional studies in the Sermon on the Mount, THE HEIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN BLESSEDNESS discussing the Beatitudes, THE HEIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING interpreting the Sermon as a whole, and now this volume, THE HEIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN DEVOTION, finishing the series and completing a trilogy on the Sermon and climaxing with a study of the Lord's Prayer in detail.

We join most heartily with Sir Richard Baker in his prayer near the opening of his book upon this theme: "And now, O Lord, since thou hast framed us a prayer: of which we are assured, that thou art pleased with the hearing it: grant unto us, that wee may bee delighted with the saying it: and that our zeale toward it, like true love, which groweth by the enjoying, may increase by the practicing; that the oftner wee say it, the more we may love it: and the more wee love it, the oftner wee may say it: that whilst more meditation breedes more knowledge; and more knowledge, more love; more love may bring more delight; and more delight, more meditation."

PART ONE

PRELIMINARY APPRECIATION

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I. *Familiarity.* Why should we study the Lord's Prayer? Everybody knows it and everybody knows what it means. It is one of the most familiar passages in the Holy Book and its sentences are so simple that any child can understand them. Most of us learned them in our infancy and we have repeated them in the church services and in our family devotions and in our private prayers all our lives long. Why should they need either interpretation or study? There are difficult portions of the Holy Scripture. Would it not be more profitable to give attention to these? There are certain parts of the Book with which we have comparatively slight acquaintance—why not devote our time to the cultivation of these strange and unfamiliar fields? The Lord's Prayer is so short and so simple and so familiar—why not go on to something new? We have repeated it some thousands and thousands of times. We know it by heart. We can say it without thinking. What is there to learn in any further study?

It may be well to remind ourselves that familiarity with its phraseology may not mean that we have exhausted either its theological implications or its devotional depths. We may have repeated its words without having mastered its meaning. At least it may be worth while to raise the question whether we know all that may be known in this perfectly familiar field. Our very familiarity may have led us to be unobservant and inattentive to beauties and mysteries which lay before our eyes but which we have not seen. Sometimes the commonplace reveals itself as a very focus of infinities, a center and seat of marvels unimagined in the dull plodding of our prosaic days. In the moment of vision the bush begins to burn and we discover to our amazement that the whole desert is ablaze with the Presence Divine.

Coleridge said, "There are some truths, and those of all others the most awful and interesting, which are too often considered as so true that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors." While we have been taking it for granted that we knew all the truth contained in this prayer, it may be that unimagined treasures lay hidden in its depths, the very existence of which we never have dreamed.

Tennyson thought that if he thoroughly understood one little flower, he would have the key to all the mysteries of the universe.

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> Hold you there, root and all, in my hand;
> Little flower, but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

Omnia exeunt in mysterium—"Everything leads out into mystery." Everything followed to its inmost essence leads to infinity. Peter Bell looked at the primrose by the river's brim and it was nothing but a primrose to him. He had seen many a primrose. He knew all about the primrose. He would have been surprised if anyone had told him that it would be well worth his while to study the primrose and investigate the primrose until he found that the familiar could become the marvelous and could reveal the divine. Linnæus, bending over one tiny blossom, said: "I bowed my head and worshiped. I saw God in his glory pass by." What if the Lord's Prayer should prove to be such a flower of devotion, and a close and reverential study of it should disclose all truth necessary to contentment of mind and satisfaction of soul concealed within its meager compass? It simply would show us again what we so often have had to learn—that all romance and mystery and beatitude lay within our reach when we least suspected it, and that all the truth which the most learned men have had to offer us was spread before our eyes all the time, if our eyes only had been opened to perceive it.

In *Clayhanger,* the opening volume of his trilogy of novels, Arnold Bennett takes some scores of pages to tell how one small boy came home from school one afternoon. Most of us would have said that the boy was a commonplace boy and that nothing interesting occurred to him that day. It was a day like other days and its incidents were much like the incidents of every day. We would have found nothing worth observing or chronicling in that slow progress of the boy from the school to his home, but the pen of the novelist lifts the veil and we find that the boy moves in a veritable fairyland of fantasy and fact. He arouses our interest and holds our attention and moves our sympathies, and we begin to realize that any boy is a mystery and a marvel if we only stop to look at him long enough to see it.

In *Jean Christophe,* the greatest of the more modern French works of fiction, Romain Rolland has given a whole volume to the description of an apartment house in Paris. It was much like scores and scores of other apartment houses in that city. The people in it were not more interesting than the people in other houses. We would have passed it by without notice, possibly. We would have considered the various families housed within it as no more worthy of study or attention than any other of our acquaintances. In the unforgettable picture of that apartment house Rolland has shown us how all life is interesting if we only observe it closely enough to appreciate that fact.

In *Pelle the Conqueror,* the greatest of all the Danish novelists, Nexo, has given an entire volume to the description of one slum tenement called The Ark. In its general decay and in the misery of its inhabitants this tenement was like too many other tenements in all our great cities. We are prone to pass them by as too filthy to be examined closely and too commonplace to deserve our study or attention. Nexo has made an epic out of The Ark. He shows us that it is a microcosm of tragedy and comedy, a setting for all the baser and nobler emotions, a mixture of earth and heaven and hell, interesting as humanity, fateful as eternity, inexhaustible in its implications for the weal or the woe of the race. We never would have suspected it, if he had not shown it to us. The outside of that tenement might have been perfectly familiar to us as we passed by it day after day, but the heart of it we never would have known if he had not taken time and trouble to reveal it to us.

In so many different ways we are taught the lesson that what is most familiar to us may be crammed full of interest and information for us which we never have suspected and for which we never have searched simply because of its familiarity. We are so slow to realize that the seeming simple may conceal the deepest depths and that all the romance of the ages is reproduced in our own neighborhood and that sometimes it is true that the perfectly familiar most deserves our study and attention. It is in that belief that we begin our investigation of this very familiar passage of Scripture, The Lord's Prayer.

II. *Superiority.* It has been considered the prayer of all prayers, the pattern prayer of all time. The saints of the church have found for it many endearing names. They have called it the central sun in the star-studded firmament of prayer, obscuring all others in the regal splendor of its superior light. They have called it the crown, the kernel, the marrow, the quintessence of all prayers; the complete catalogue of all heavenly and earthly gifts; the fountain-head of all good things; the arsenal and armory for all spiritual warfare; the mightiest shield of all the saints; the lighthouse of the church in the midst of the breakers of sin; a melodious harp; a straight ladder to the skies; a golden gateway into the treasure house of heaven; the key of paradise.

Thomas à Kempis said of it: "Among all the prayers and praises of God there is none more holy than this prayer. This prayer which the Lord taught us surpasses all the prayers and longing sighs of the saints, for it includes in itself most fully and most mysteriously all the sayings of the prophets and the honey-flowing words of the Psalms and the Songs. It asks everything necessary, it praises God in the highest degree, it joins the soul to God, and lifts it from the earth to heaven; it pierces beyond the clouds and mounts above the angelic choir. Blessed is he who meditates upon these words of the Christ!"[1]

III. *Brevity.* As we meditate upon them the first thing we observe is that this prayer is surprisingly brief. We say it in a minute or a half minute. We seem to be through before we have fairly begun. There are only nine short sentences in the prayer: only fifty-seven words in the Greek, and only sixty-nine in the English translation, including the final ascription of praise. The Lord's Prayer, then, is not like most of our prayers in its length; and our prayers are not as long as they used to be. The Puritans prayed with the hour-glass in the pulpit, one or two hours at a stretch. The fathers used to have the Short Prayer and the Long Prayer in each service and the Short Prayer was as long as our pulpit prayers are now and the Long Prayer was a quarter of an hour or a half hour or more in length. It would have shocked the religious sensibilities of those days to have any of these pulpit prayers shortened.

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[1] Arndt, *Das Vater Unser*, p. 148.

In the *Minutes of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* we read: "After Doctor Twisse had begun with a brief prayer, Mr. Marshall prayed large two hours most divinely. After Mr. Arrowsmith preached one hour, then a psalm, thereafter Mr. Vines prayed nearly two hours, and Mr. Palmer preached one hour, and Mr. Seaman prayed near two hours, then a psalm." Such prolonged spiritual exercises were the usual thing in those days. In his

Life of Cromwell, John Morley tells us how Johnston of Warriston, intending to spend an hour or two in prayer, once carried his devotions from six in the morning until he was amazed by the bells ringing at eight in the evening. In Wesley's time in a holiness revival Mary Bosanquet prayed for four hours. Yet the Master had said, After this manner pray ye; and his pattern prayer had only fifty-seven words!

When Jabez Bunting died, we are told that "the Rev. John Bowers recited a prayer forty-five minutes long, in a chapel filled with mourners." A prominent Methodist died and his pastor expected to preach his funeral sermon. Much to his disappointment a bishop was invited to do that service, and the pastor was asked only to make the opening prayer. He gave the Lord a complete biography of the departed brother in his prayer and prayed longer than the bishop preached!

There is not a long prayer to be found in the Bible, and the model prayer, the Lord's Prayer, cannot be stretched to two minutes or three minutes even in slowest possible repetition. The longest prayer in the Bible is the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, and that was a public, formal prayer, offered in the presence of great multitudes and in behalf of the nation. It was delivered upon a very special occasion, such as the centuries of Jewish history had not seen; and it was not the prayer of a prophet or a saint but of a monarch whose career as a whole showed that he was not a particularly pious man. That prayer was exceptional in its character. There were many things to be asked for that day and many interests to be represented. Yet that longest prayer in the Bible, Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, was not as long as the average prayer in our regular and ordinary services, and it will not bear comparison as far as the time consumed in its repetition is concerned with the long and globe-encircling prayers in which most of our pastors indulge.

Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance from Sennacherib and his hosts, the prayer of a king in behalf of a nation, was only a minute and a half long.[2] All the people brought their gifts of gold and silver and brass and iron and precious stones for the building of the Temple and then David prayed in thanksgiving for the people and for Solomon, a prayer for a nation on a great and special occasion; and the prayer was less than four minutes long.[3]

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[2] 2 Kings 19. 15-19.

[3] 1 Chron. 29. 10-19.

The rabbis had a proverb, "Prolix prayer prolongeth life," and many of our preachers pray as if they believed it; but the people get tired to death as they listen to the endless petitions. Jesus said, "The heathen think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not like unto them!"[4] That Old Testament preacher had said before him, "Let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven and thou upon the earth. Therefore, let thy words be few!"[5] After Isaiah had a vision of the God of heaven he said only two things, "Behold me: send me," and "Lord, how long?"[6] He was not voluble after that vision. When Job had a like experience, he laid his hand on his mouth;[7] and it was when he had become silent that he heard God speak. In strictest harmony with these injunctions and examples all the prayers recorded in the Bible are short; and the prayers which are heard and immediately answered are for the most part mere ejaculations or single sentences.

The most immediately effective prayer Peter ever prayed was a prayer of three words—"Lord, save me!"[8] It was no sooner said than it was answered, and it was fortunate for Peter that that was true, for he was sinking in the stormy sea and he needed instantaneous salvation from drowning. He had no time for any prolonged preface or peroration, no time for prolixity in supplication. What he had to say he had to say quickly, before his mouth was filled with water, before his lips were shut in the sea depths or in death. He knew just what he wanted and he put the whole of his desire into three words, and that brief prayer was sufficient to save him in his present necessity.

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[4] Matt. 6. 7, 8.

[5] Eccl. 5. 2.

[6] Isa. 6. 8, 11.

[7] Job 40. 4.

[8] Matt. 14. 30.

The publican stood in the Temple and prayed a prayer of six words—"O God, pity me the sinner!"[9] He had no sooner said it than he was saved. He turned and went down from the Temple to his own home a justified man. A prayer of six words was sufficient. It expressed all the reverence and humility, all the confession and entreaty that was necessary to bring an immediate answer. His whole soul was focused on God. His whole heart was in his petition. It was not the length but the strength of his prayer which prevailed. It was not the quantity of it but the quality of it which counted. It was not the size of it but the spirit of it which won the Master's praise and the Father's justification.

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[9] Luke 18. 13.

The thief upon the cross prayed a prayer of nine words, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom."[10] It was no sooner said than he had the promise of Paradise. The Master prayed, "Father, glorify thy name!"[11] It was no sooner said than the Voice answered, "I have both glorified it and I will glorify it again." These short prayers seem to have been sufficient, and they are characteristic of the prayers of the Bible. They were sincere prayers, and sincerity and prolixity are not naturally joined together. The heart burdened with desire will find the direct road to the throne. It will waste no time in preliminaries, but will at once ask for what it needs.

Jesus had no use for *βαττολογία* and *πολυλογία* in prayer. He said, "Use not vain repetitions.[12] Do not indulge in much speaking."[13] Wendt translated: "Do not babble as the heathen do," and Luther said "Do not blatter." The endless repetitions of Hindu and Buddhist prayer formulas, the incessant interjections of pious phrases in Mohammedan business transactions, the reiterations of Ave Marias and Pater Nosters in rosary devotions, the floods of petitions let loose in Protestant congregations in Sunday services suggest *βαττολογία* and *πολυλογία* and may come under the Master's condemnation as surely as the grinding of the prayer wheel which turns out so many thousand prayers with every revolution. Repeated prayers may be vain repetitions. Long prayers may be much speaking without much thinking and without much effect. Augustine said, *"Non multa locutio sed multa precatio,"* and we may pray most when we say least, and we may pray least when we say most, and Luther in the same spirit declared, "Few words and much meaning is Christian; many words and little meaning is heathenish."

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[10] Luke 23. 42.

[11] John 12. 28.

[12] Matt. 6. 7, *μὴ βατταλογήσητε.*

[13] Matt. 6, 7, *ἐν τῃ πολυλογία.*

We pray to no selfish or sleepy neighbor who must be harassed into granting our desire. We pray to no unjust judge who must be worn out with our importunity. We pray to our Father who knows what things we have need of before we ask him, and who is more ready to give than we are to receive. What did Jesus say to his disciples? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, you need only to ask and it shall be given you; to seek and you shall find;

to knock and it shall be opened unto you, without delay, without importunity, without vain repetitions, without long praying and much speaking; for a few well considered words expressing a real and heartfelt desire is the acceptable form of prayer unto God, as all the precepts concerning prayer and all the examples of prayer given in the Scriptures go to show."

This pattern prayer given by Jesus to his disciples is simple and short. It is one of the best examples we know of *multum in parvo*—"much in little." In the whole history of Christendom where can we find any petition with such compass of thought in so brief a form? The poorest memory can retain it. The children can understand it. It satisfies the aspirations of some of the most mature of the saints. It includes all the longings of most devoted souls. All our other prayers can be shown to be only variations of and amplifications upon the petitions of this model prayer. We spend hours in praying them, and we say this prayer in one minute.

Frederick Denison Maurice said, "The prayer may be committed to memory quickly, but it is slowly learned by heart." It may take a lifetime to realize all of its petitions. It may represent the consummation of the

Christian faith and experience to be able to pray this prayer with fullness of feeling and anything like adequate appreciation. Yet it is so short that we usually tack it on to our prayers as a sort of appendix, just to signify that we have come to an end of our devotions; and we hardly would think that we had been praying if we took no more time for that exercise than was needed for the repetition of the Lord's Prayer. If we begin with it, it is so short that we are through with it before we have developed a devotional frame of mind; and if we close with it, it is so short that we feel it necessary to get through with a deal of preliminary petitioning and do all our real praying before we reach it.

May it not be that its very brevity has a lesson for us, that the most of our praying is vain repetition and at least three fourths of our prayers might as well be left unsaid? If the pattern prayer is less than one minute in length, it may be that the longer our prayers are the farther they depart from the ideal. It may be that our prayers would be improved more by shortening them than by lengthening them. Especially in our public or pulpit prayers it may be better to omit something than to include everything. It may be more helpful to concentrate our thought upon some one needful petition than to be troubled and anxious about many things to the distraction of those who listen. Psychologically, prolonged praying before a congregation cannot be justified. Successful intercession demands an intensity of attention and powers of concentration of which comparatively few are capable, and when the public prayer goes rumbling on interminably and rambling round the universe, attention flags, concentration ceases, and the prayer becomes a matter of words and nothing more.

Volubility in prayer is likely to preclude much expectation of answer. Savonarola suggested that sometimes "we are so busy talking to God that we have no time to hear him." We are so fluent in petition that he has no chance to get a word in edgeways. By the time we are through praying the time for answer has passed by. It takes concentration of thought and desire to formulate phrases for our petitions like these of the Lord's Prayer. If we took time to boil down into briefest compass all the surging and seething emotions and commotions of our souls, if we took time to sift all the clamoring and conflicting thoughts filling and confusing our brain and the multitudes of petty and principal desires flooding and overwhelming our hearts, it might be that we would arrive at a residue of meditated and meaning-full petitions which would be more acceptable unto God. The model prayer is a very short prayer. That is one of the notable things concerning it.

IV. *Simplicity.* Its simplicity is as apparent as its brevity. It can be understood by the common people. It appeals to the youngest and to the oldest with equal force. Its words are those of our everyday use. There is no vagueness in it. It has no platitudes. It has neither sesquipedalian vocabulary nor philosophical abstractions of thought. It takes the highest type of genius to write a Hamlet's soliloquy or a Twenty-third Psalm, to put a fullness of thought into perfect plainness of speech. The most of us cannot attain unto it. Jesus believes in simplicity in prayer. He says: "Would you know how to pray? You need no priest, no animal sacrifice, no formalities of gesture or posture, no preparatory ceremonials or ritual, no special eloquence or personal talent. You need only to come like a child to God the Father and in the most simple language to make your needs known to him. Pray as simply as any child. If you find it hard to pray, it may be because you find it hard to be simple. The Father is not impressed with your erudition or theology. It is your simplicity and sincerity which appeal to him. Many a peasant prays more acceptably to him than many a philosopher. It is the humble, trustful, simple prayer of the child, expressing the simple needs in simple language, which he approves and answers."

If we only would take time to pass our devotional lucubrations through the crucible of agonized intensity of feeling and thought, in the end we might have a diamond like the Lord's Prayer instead of a lump of coal. The lump of coal is consumed in much heat and black smoke. The diamond abides, clear-faceted and translucent, smaller in size but more beautiful and more valuable than our many smoky lumps of coal can be. The Lord's Prayer is a diamond, as definitely defined and as sparklingly and perpetually invaluable as any cut diamond ever is. Like the diamond, it may be small in size but it is clear as the light, and the very simplicity of its structure gives it supreme worth. It can be appreciated by both child and sage. The child has joy in its simplicity. The sage revels in its profundity. Both find that it meets their need.

V. *Profundity.* One of the old writers has said of it that while it is so simple and easily understood by everyone, so that even the most unlearned and uncultured can comprehend it and appreciate it, it is yet so profound that no man ever has been able to exhaust its meaning, no thinker ever has been able to sound its depths, no preacher ever has been able to preach it out or thoroughly explain it, and no praying soul ever has been able to pray it in all its divine fullness of petition; for it contains the whole gospel with all the teachings of the faith and all moral truths in compact form, and with its promises and its hopes it reaches out into the immeasurable. Its thought is richer than any sea. Each word is deeper than any depth.[14]

VI. *Universality.* These two characteristics of simplicity and profundity make the Lord's Prayer suitable for use by all and under all circumstances. It is for every day and it suits every condition of life. It has been suggested that "if Christ had left for our pathway of praying language, words of passion, or utterances of sublime expression, true only in moments of rare light or exaltation, that sometimes would not have been true prayer for us, for it would not have fitted our average life, but this always fits us. It fits every mood and stage of our soul's history. It fits us when our wants are few, when our pulsations are quiet, when our thoughts are level. It fits us when we are just beginning and when we are just ending our journey. So, when I am but a very young child of the Most High, the moments of weakness will be rare indeed when I cannot speak this language, and be stronger for it; but if I have just come down from the third heavens, feeling that henceforth I shall *be* more than I ever yet have been, all the life of my soul rides out in these words, and by this expression, that life gets to be more strong, rapid, and victorious. The prayer is, to borrow the beautiful words of Augustine, 'little to the little and great to the great. Each word is a seed, and the growing power of the praying life we put into it, gradually makes it throw off the husk and become a tree.' "[15]

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[14] Arndt, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

We can pray it when we are well and strong and we can pray it when we are sick and weak. We can pray it when we are filled with joy and when we are burdened with grief. We can pray it in our festival occasions and in our funeral occasions. The child repeats it at the mother's knee and the man gathers comfort and strength from it in all the journey of life, and the aged saint whispers it in faltering accents as he passes over into the peace of God. It is suitable for the sunshine and the shade. It is suited to all ages and to all minds.

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[15] Stanford, *The Lord's Prayer*, pp. 33, 34.

Carlyle wrote to Erskine, "The other night, in my sleepless tossings about, which were growing more and more miserable, these words, that brief and grand Prayer, came strangely into my mind, with an altogether new emphasis; as if *written,* and shining for me in mild pure splendor, on the black bosom of the night there; when I, as it were, *read* them word for word—with a sudden check to my imperfect wanderings, with a sudden softness of composure which was much unexpected. Not for perhaps thirty or forty years had I once formally repeated that Prayer; nay, I never felt before how intensely the voice of man's soul it is; the inmost aspiration of all that is high and pious in poor Human Nature; right worthy to be recommended with an 'after this manner pray ye.' "[16]

The nations have put it into their liturgies and the centuries have repeated it. Advancing thought never will outgrow it, and the wistful hearts of men never have grown tired of it. It is as useful to-day as when Jesus first uttered it. It will meet the need of every individual in every civilization until the end of time. That is the marvel of it, that it represents and satisfies the individual's desire and yet voices completely the collective petition of the race. It is the prayer of humanity, the universal prayer of man. There is nothing in it local or limited. It says nothing of any particular nationality or ecclesiasticism. It might have been composed in Persia or in Palestine, in India or in China, in Africa or America, anywhere on the habitable globe where a child of the heavenly Father lived and prayed. The converted pundit from the Orient and the redeemed waif from the slums find it all-sufficient for their need.

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[16] *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen,* vol. ii, p. 324.

It is repeated by the soul in its solitude and by the crowded congregations in the central cathedrals of worship. Lisped by babes and spoken by the veteran saints of the church, in Christian homes, in Sunday schools, in country churches, in city temples, in stately cathedrals, in the open-air—this is the prayer of the Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic and the Protestant alike. All differences of creed disappear in the voicing of these common petitions. Day after day and year after year this prayer is offered by a great multitude which no man can number, of every tribe and people and kindred and nation. In a hundred languages and from innumerable conditions of life, rich and poor, young and old, the ignorant and the wise make it the vehicle of their devotion. In every hour of the day and from every portion of the earth it ascends unto heaven. It was prayed by the fathers and by the fathers of the fathers through all the Christian centuries, and as we pray it we are linked in our supplications with all the sainted past.

Jesus repeated this prayer in the beginning. James and John and Peter and Paul and Luke and Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla used to kneel in their devotions and say these words. The first Christian assemblies in the upper room at Jerusalem and in the cities of Macedonia and Achaia and in the catacombs at Rome repeated them. The apostles, the martyrs, the saints of the centuries have prayed with these petitions; and now we pray with the same words to the same heavenly Father. We are of the same family and of the same communion with them. In the Lord's Prayer all the Lord's children of every age and of every creed and of every nation are one. It is the universal prayer, enshrining the adoration and devotion of this world and the world beyond the grave.

The Master promised that if two of us would agree as to anything we might ask, it would be given to us. The Master assured us that if we asked anything according to his will, he would hear and answer us. In the Lord's Prayer we know that we are asking in accordance with the Lord's will, and in the Lord's Prayer the holy catholic church of all the creeds and all space and all time has agreed to ask for the same things. The ever-increasing volume of petition rolls up to heaven, and we who pray it now have a share in all the supplication of the past and all the supplication of the present and we have the double assurance which unquestioned agreement among the disciples and unquestioned agreement with the will of God can give, and we pray with ever-increasing faith that our petitions will be heard and surely answered.

All men who recognize the existence of a God may unite in the repetition of this pearl of all prayers. The Mohammedans can pray it with the same sincerity as the Jews. The Jews can pray it with as much sincerity as the Christians. There is nothing in this prayer which would preclude its use by anyone who is not an atheist; and the more he studies it the more he will find that it satisfies all his praying need.

The Jewish rabbis enjoined the use of certain prayers but allowed that under certain circumstances convenience or necessity might constrain their disciples to fall back upon shorter forms of prayer, and for such emergencies they provided what they called "fountain prayers," short summaries of prayer, epitomes not of any one prayer but of all prayer, condensed suggestions of both the spirit and form of all devotion. As their rabbi or teacher Jesus may have prescribed this "fountain prayer" for his disciples. It is a pattern or epitome prayer. It has all the essentials of religious devotion in it. It excludes all non-essentials, anything and everything which is antagonistic to faith, and anything and everything which is superfluous or mere commentary and fringe.

As the universal prayer, at the World's Parliament of Religion in Chicago every session was opened with the repetition in unison of this pattern or epitome of devotion by the representatives of the leading faiths of the world. Where could they have found any other form of petition which would have answered all needs? When those disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray he might have given them a form which would have been Palestinian and Jewish, suited to their conditions alone. Instead he gave them a prayer without a word in it which would nail it down to any particular time or place.

It is a prayer of universal scope and application.

VII. *Comprehensiveness.* Hugh Latimer said, "As the law of love is the sum and abridgment of the other laws, so this prayer is the sum and abridgment of all other prayers. All other prayers are contained in this prayer; yea, whatsoever mankind hath need of as to soul and body, that same is contained in this prayer."[17] John Wycliffe is said to have gone even further than this and declared, "If thou runnest about by all the words of holy prayers, thou shalt find nothing which is not contained in this prayer of the Lord. Whoever saith a thing that may not pertain to this prayer of the gospel, he prayeth bodily and unjustly and unlawfully, as methinketh."[18] Augustine said the same thing[19] and Cyprian asserted that the Lord's Prayer was "so copious in special virtue that there is nothing omitted in all our prayers and petitions which is not comprehended in this epitome of heavenly doctrine."

For what else do we need to pray? We pray for the recognition of the majesty and the mercy of the Most High. We pray for the universal reign of righteousness. We pray for earth to reproduce the obedience and the blessedness of heaven. We pray for the provision for daily needs. We pray for divine help and divine deliverance. Alexander Maclaren says: "There is everything in this prayer —God's relations to man, man's to God and his fellows, the foundation-stones of Christian theology, of Christian morals, of Christian society, of Christian politics. . . . The words of Christ, like the works of God, are inexhaustible. Their depth is concealed beneath an apparent simplicity which the child and the savage can understand; but as we gaze upon them and try to fathom all their meaning, they open as the skies above us do when we look steadily into their blue chambers, or as the sea at our feet does when we bend over to pierce its clear obscure." Their meaning exceeds our greatest insight.

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[17] Latimer, *Seven Sermons on The Lord's Prayer.* Sermon I.

[18] *Lay Folks' Catechism,* p. 105.

[19] Augustine, *Epist.* cxxx, 22, *nihil invenies quod in ista Dominica non contineatur et concludatur oratione.*

Luther once declared, "I adore the divine fullness of Scripture." Surely there is no other portion of the Scripture which is more inexhaustible in its meaning and in which every student may find new visions of truth and new revelations of glory to the end of time. All the essentials of prayer are here and all essential truth as well. In the seventeenth century Anthony Faringdon said: "If our whole life were prayer (as in some sense it should be); if we did prolong our prayer, not till midnight, as Saint Paul did his sermon, but till our last night, death itself; yet he that shall say his Paternoster, maketh his request as large as ours. Did we multiply millions of prayers, these six petitions are as many as they. All our petitions are but the echo of these, or, rather, these in other words."[20] As the Lord's Prayer comprehends all prayers it comprehends all truth. Tertullian called it *brevarium totius evangelii*[21]—"the compendium of the whole gospel of God to man." In his *Life of Jesus,* Lange says, "It may be compared to a pearl in which the light of the whole sky is reflected."[22] Adolph Saphir wrote a whole volume about the Lord's Prayer, and he put his faith into the preface of the book when he said, "There can scarcely be a more comprehensive subject, for this model prayer embraces every doctrine of Scripture and every aspect of Christian life."[23] In the book itself he declares, "The prayer is short, that it may be quickly learned, easily remembered, and frequently used; but it contains all things pertaining to life and godliness."[24]

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[20] Faringdon, *Sermons*, 1657.

[21] Tertullian, de orat., ii.

[22] Lange, *Leben Jesu*, iv. 78, *Es ist einer Perle vergleichbar, in welchem sich das Licht des ganzen Himmels spiegelt.*

[23] Saphir, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. v.

In a series of mission addresses on the Lord's Prayer a modern evangelist has asserted, "As a Hymn of praise and adoration; as a Model of intercession and supplication; as a Form of self-examination; as a Summary of meditation; as a Christian Creed; in each and every phase of the soul's communion with God, you will discover, if you search with diligence and patience, the whole mystery of religion in this miraculous Prayer."[25] John Ruskin once wrote some incisive letters to the English clergy, and in them he said: "I want to put this question to your council, how this gospel is to be preached everywhere or to all nations, if, first, its preachers have not determined quite clearly what it is; and might not such definition, acceptable to the entire body of the Church of Christ, be arrived at by merely explaining in their completeness and life the terms of the Lord's Prayer—the first words taught to children all over the Christian world?"

It is in their prayers that all Christians come nearest together. It is in the Lord's Prayer that all Christians become one. Christendom has recognized in the Lord's Prayer the model prayer. It has agreed with Isaac Barrow that this form of prayer was "composed and dictated by Him who best knew what we ought to pray for and how we ought to pray; what matter of desire, what manner of address, what disposition of mind, would be most pleasing and acceptable to his Father, would most become and fit us in our approaches to him. We observe the sublimity, the gravity, the necessity, the singular choiceness of the matter, together with the fit order and just disposition thereof, according to the natural precedence of things in dignity and necessity; the full brevity, the deep plainness, the comely simplicity of expression; the lowly reverence signified therein, accompanied with due faith and confidence—these and the like virtues directive of our devotion we observe running generally through the whole contexture of this venerable form."[26]

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[24] Saphir, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[25] Haskett Smith, *Addresses on The Lord's Prayer*, p. 3.

What is the disposition of mind most acceptable to the Father? This prayer fully answers that question. He who says, "Our Father," must have filial faith. He who prays, "Hallowed be thy name," and means it, must be reverent. He who petitions, "Thy kingdom come," must be a loyal subject to the King.

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[26] Barrow, *Works*, vol. ii, p. 552.

He who says, "Thy will be done," must have a submissive spirit, consecrated, conformed. He who asks, "Give us our daily bread," must recognize the Divine Providence in all his life. He who prays, "Forgive us our debts," must acknowledge that all his help is from God and all his hope of salvation comes only from him. He who dares to say, "For we forgive," must be characterized by a charity more than human, like that of heaven. He who prays, "Deliver us from evil," must be wholly dependent upon the Holy Spirit for present and eternal victory. The man who prays this prayer feelingly and sincerely will be filial, loyal, reverent, consecrated, dependent, devoted, a pattern Christian man. The model prayer is the prayer of a model man.

VIII. *Structure.* If we add the word "Amen" as the fitting close, the prayer in the original Greek will read as follows:

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς,
Ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου,
ἐλθάτω ἡ βασιλεία σου,
γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου,
ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς.
Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον
δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον·
καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν
ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν·
καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν,
ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ. Ἀμήν.

A glance at this form will show that the prayer consists of two parts, the former with five lines and the latter with six. In the five lines of the former part the first and the fifth line end with the Greek letter Sigma, our English letter S, while the second, third and fourth lines end with the Greek word Σου and the Greek letter Upsilon, our English letter U. In the six lines of the latter part each line ends with the Greek letter Nu, our English letter N, and there are three couplets of lines, all of which couplets form complete petitions; and in the second couplet each line ends with the Greek word *ἡμῶν*, the English word Our, while the third couplet summarizes all the petitions of the second half of the prayer. As the first line of the prayer, the Address "Our Father who art in heaven," contains implicitly the promise of the fulfillment of all the succeeding petitions, the last line of the prayer, "Deliver us from evil," sums up all the foregoing petitions and in a single clause presents the whole of man's desire from God. This symmetry of structure and these mnemonic aids must have been of great help in the beginning in fixing the form and preserving the integrity of the prayer.

In English we can reproduce only imperfectly this original form of the prayer, but we can attempt it with only partial success as follows:

Our Father who art in heaven;
  Thy name be hallowed,
  Thy kingdom come,
  Thy will be done,
As in heaven, so on earth.
  Our daily bread
    give us this day;
  And forgive us our debts
    as we forgive our debtors;
  And bring us not into temptation,
    but deliver us from evil. Amen.

As we look at these Greek and English forms it is evident at once that the prayer consists of two principal parts. The first has to do with God, his name, his kingdom, his will. The second has to do with man, his bread, his sins, his evil. In the first part no conjunction is used, and all the blessings asked are co-ordinate and equal, the holiness of the Father, the kingdom of the Son, and the will of the Holy Spirit wrought in the renewed will of man. In the second part the three petitions are united with three conjunctions, *and* forgive us, *and* lead us not, *but* deliver us. Each part has a parallelism. The first part asks that the name may be hallowed, the kingdom may come, the will may be done *as* in heaven also upon earth; and in the fifth petition in the second half we ask that we may be forgiven *as* we forgive those who are indebted to us. These are very simple facts concerning the external structure of the prayer, but they are worth our noticing and as our study proceeds we shall see that there is considerable significance attached to some or all of them.

There always has been a difference of opinion as to the number of petitions in the model prayer. Origen, Chrysostom, and most of the Reformed theologians said there were six, three of them having to do with the honor of God and three of them having to do with the need of man. Augustine and others have held that there were seven petitions, three corresponding to the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and four corresponding to the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," since in each of these petitions we pray for our brethren as much and as often as we pray for ourselves, "Give *us our* daily bread, Forgive *us our* debts, Lead *us* not into temptation, but deliver *us* from evil." The difference in numbering occurs in connection with the last clauses. If we consider, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," as one petition, then we have only six in all. If we consider, "Lead us not into temptation," as one petition and, "Deliver us from evil," as another, we have seven petitions in all. We are inclined to think that the Greek Fathers were right and that we have here three petitions referring to God and three referring to ourselves. These petitions are prefaced with an Address, "Our Father who art in heaven." It is with this address that our more detailed study will begin.

Summarizing our conclusions at this point the outline of the prayer will be as follows:

I. The Address.
  "Our Father who art in heaven."
II. Six Petitions.
  1. For God's glory.
    (1) "Hallowed be thy name."
    (2) "Thy kingdom come."
    (3) "Thy will be done on earth,
      as it is in heaven."
  2. For man's need.
    (1) "Give us this day our daily bread."
    (2) "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."
    (3) "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
III. Conclusion.
  "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

PART TWO

THE ADDRESS

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THE ADDRESS

I. *Best Name.* We notice, first, that this address names the prayer for most of our fellow Christians. The Catholics call it the Paternoster, and the Germans call it the Vater Unser. Other modern tongues follow their example, and no better name can be given the prayer than its first two words furnish us. Our name for it, The Lord's Prayer, is a misleading and inadequate one. It is the Disciples' Prayer rather than the Lord's Prayer. It is the prayer given by the Lord to the disciples and the prayer for forgiveness of trespasses indicates that it could not have been the prayer of his own habitual use. The Sinless One did not need to offer that petition. It is a pity that we do not call the prayer, "Our Father." That would bring us into line with the rest of Christendom and would give us the best name the prayer can have, the name expressing the faith and love upon the basis of which all these petitions are presented.

II. *Conception.* "Our Father who art in heaven!" We have become so accustomed to these words and they glide so easily from our tongues that it may be well to ask what mental image they call forth within us and what spiritual conception we have before us when we use this formula. There is an ancient letter from Claudius to one Andres, giving the latter directions how to pray, and in the introduction to this letter Claudius says: "When I pray I always think first of my blessed Father, how good he is and how willing he is to give good gifts to me. Then I represent to my own mind the whole world as my Father's house and all mankind in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America are then in my thoughts as my brethren; and God sits in heaven upon a golden throne and has his right hand stretched out over the sea and even to the ends of the earth and his left hand is full of salvation and blessing, and the mountain peaks round about him smoke as in incense about his throne. Then I begin and say, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." Does that conception seem fantastic or petty or childish or gross, too anthropomorphic and too realistic by far? It surely is a thousand times better than to have no conception at all.

Hegel said that God was pure being and

that pure being was pure nothing; and if that be true, those who would pray to Pure Nothing could have nothing but a perfectly blank conception of the Being to whom they prayed. Eckhart, the mystic, said, "God is nothing and God is something; that which is something is also nothing; what God is he is altogether." That may mean something, but to most people it will mean nothing; and if men had no better conception of God than that most of them never would pray at all.

Renan once printed a prayer which he addressed to "Our Father, the Abyss." Was it his conception of God that he was a boundless, bottomless, fathomless void? Was his prayer a petition cast into an infinite hole in the universe, a wastebasket receptacle for all useless things? Or did he use that title for the Father in the devout sense of Savonarola when he said, *"Abyssus abyssum invocat. Abyssus miseriæ invocat abyssum misericordiæ, abyssus peccatorum invocat abyssum gratiarum. Major est abyssus misericordiæ, quam abyssus miseriæ. Absorbeat ergo abyssus abyssum. Absorbeat abyssus misericordiæ abyssum miseriæ.*—Deep calleth unto deep. The depth of misery calleth unto the depth of mercy, the depth of sins calleth unto the depth of graces. Greater is the depth of mercy than the depth of misery. Therefore let deep absorb deep. Let the abyss of mercy absorb the abyss of misery."[1] In any case it does not seem to be a satisfying conception of God. A prayer to an abyss is little or no better than the prayer of an atheist.

Dr. John Duncan was an atheist in his earlier life, but at last he was convinced that there was a God in the universe; and he told his friend that he "danced with delight" when he realized that he really had attained to that faith. He said, "It is a blessed thing that we are not placed amid the grinding and wheeling of a great Machine of a universe without guiding hand or animating heart. There is a God! There is a God!" Henceforth he had a God with a helping hand and a loving heart to whom he could pray.

That is the advantage which the believer has over the atheist or over the scientist who recognizes no personality behind the laws with which he deals. The scientist can believe in a creating and directing Force behind all other forces, but as long as he has no other conception of it than "the resident force of the universe," or "the first great Cause," or "the stream of tendency not ourselves which makes for righteousness," he cannot pray with any fervency or with any power. Man must believe that God is a Person before he can address him with any prayer of faith. Men will not pray to a Force or a First Great Cause or a Stream of Tendency or a Law or an Abyss or to Pure Being which is Pure Nothing. It would be pure nonsense to do it. Men must believe that God is a Person and that he is interested in them and loves them and hears them when they pray and rewards those who seek diligently after him before they can pray to him in faith.

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[1] Savonarola in Psa. 51.

That is the first lesson Jesus taught us in this prayer: God is no mere law, no metaphysical abstraction, no philosophical formula, no scientific deduction, but a Person to be approached, to be addressed, and to be called "Our Father." We might pray with Pope,

> "Thou great first cause, least understood,
> Who all my sense confined
> To know but this—that thou art good,
> And that myself am blind,"

and fall far below the conception of God with which Jesus would have us begin this prayer. We might pray with Doctor Johnson,

> "From thee, great God, we spring; to thee we tend—
> Path, motive, guide, original, and end!"

and yet fall far short of the filial faith with which Jesus would have us approach our

Father in heaven. A Great First Cause may be good, but it will be little or no good to pray to an impersonal influence or force of that sort. The great God may be our "path, motive, guide, original, and end," but we want a Father and a Friend. Men never will pray to an Impersonal Providence, unknowable and unknown. They might adore some shadowy conception of that kind, but they never could commune with any dim Deity in the faraway recesses of the universe. God must come into nearer relationship with the race before there can be any heartfelt communion with him in prayer.

How thankful we ought to be that when God revealed himself to men in his Son, Jesus of Nazareth, that Son taught men to pray and he did not say, "When ye pray, say, O thou great Judge of the living and the dead"! He might have said that, and then we would have approached God even as Job said that he wished he could: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments."[2] We would have to plead our case like some lawyer for the prosecution or the defense, and we might expect to win it according to the cogency of our arguments or the importunateness of our pleading. Jesus did not tell us to address the Great Judge of all, but our Father in heaven; and that name is in itself a sufficient argument. We do not need to fill our mouths with lengthy or importunate pleadings. Our cause is adequately presented, our case is won, as soon as we speak that name.

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[2] Job 23. 3, 4.

Leopold von Ranke wrote a prayer for his daily use in which he said, "Who is the power that creates life in me? Who giveth knowledge and understanding? Who preserveth the soul that it may not fail? Thou, the Almighty One and Triune God. Thou hast called me out of nothing: I am prostrate before the steps of thy throne." Jesus did not tell us to approach God in that way.

In 2 Esdras 8. 20-24 we find a prayer which begins thus, "O Lord, thou that dwellest in everlastingness, who beholdest from above things in heaven and in the air, whose throne is inestimable, whose glory may not be comprehended, before whom the hosts of angels stand with trembling, whose service is conversant in wind and fire, whose words are true and sayings constant, whose commandment is strong and ordinance fearful, whose look drieth up the depths, and indignation maketh the mountains to wilt away, hear thou the prayer of thy servant." That prayer may be good enough for the Apocrypha but it would be altogether out of place in the New Testament.

A prayer which may have been used by the contemporaries of Jesus began with these words, "Blessed art thou, O Jehovah, our God and the God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, the great and mighty and terrible God, God most high, maker of heaven and earth, our shield and the shield of our fathers." That was a worthy beginning of devotion, but it was not the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray.

He did not command us, "When ye pray, say, O thou Lord God Almighty, Creator of the universe, Governor of all things, dwelling in light unapproachable, perfect in majesty, wisdom, and might." He might have said that, and we would have been in the condition of that peasant in Saxony whom Martin Luther was catechizing and who said, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." Luther asked him the meaning of the word, "Almighty." The countryman answered honestly enough, "I do not know," and Luther said: "Nor do I know; nor do all the learned men in the world know. However, you may safely believe that God is your Father, and that he is both able and willing to save and protect yourself and all your neighbors. Almighty God is the lovely Father of mankind."

Jesus said, "When ye pray, say, Our Father." He must have intended that those words should mean something to us and be more than a mere formula to be spoken thoughtlessly out of an empty head and an empty heart. Our Father who art in heaven! that name ought to fill us, head, heart, and soul, brimful of suggestion, adoration, exaltation. If it does not, it is time that we quit saying it until it is no longer meaningless to us, void of all spiritual beauty and power; and until at least we have asked ourselves the question, Why do we say, "Our Father who art in heaven"? and why did Jesus teach us to begin to pray with these words, "Our Father who art in heaven"? We shall try to answer that question now.

III. *Relation.* Everyone knows the meaning of the word "father," and something of that which is implied in the relationship between father and child. There are those who by choice or by chance live and die in the unmarried state and, therefore, never know in personal experience the joys of fatherhood or motherhood and never are able to say, "My child." There are husbands and wives who by choice or by unfortunate chance never have the privilege of welcoming any children into the home and in the barrenness of their home circle never can say to son or daughter, "You are my child." However, every living soul, married or unmarried, childless or in a house full of children, is itself somebody's child, calls someone father and knows something at least of what is implied in that name. There are those who have been orphaned from birth, and there are those whose fathers have not been a blessing to them, and these know from observation rather than from personal experience what the ideal relationship between father and child may be. Everyone may not know what it is to *be* a father, but everyone knows what it is to *have* a father, and even those who have had little or no joy in a father know what joy and blessing a real, that is to say, an ideal, father would be.

In the ideal relationship the father first of all gives life to the child. The father's blood flows through his veins. To a greater or less degree the father gives the child his characteristic mental and spiritual traits, and the child's face is a miniature reproduction of the father's face. The father furnishes all that is necessary for the child's comfort and pleasure through babyhood, boyhood, and youth. The father feeds him, clothes him, shelters him, provides for all his needs, sends him to school, educates him by example and discipline in the home. Father and son maintain the most intimate relationship in constant intercourse of thought and communion of soul. The father is sympathetic in trouble, always disposed to condone delinquency and to forgive offenses if it can be done with justice and with profit to the son.

Then, when the son is fully prepared by discipline and education and experience to enter into the father's purposes and to reproduce the father's plans, he shares in the father's business and at last he takes full charge of his father's property as his inheritance. This is the ideal relationship, in which the name "father" stands for all parental provision, protection, education, consolation, and inheritance. In this relationship the father gives everything which the child may need, and the child owes everything to the father's love. Through such relationship the name "father" has come to stand to all men for one of the highest titles of honor they can give, and it is reserved for those for whom they have especial reverence and regard.

There is that man with whitened hair and with step a bit unsteady, it may be, from old age, but with genial countenance and gentle words of wisdom and good cheer, whose judgment is valued and whose presence is a benediction, whom everybody loves and whom everybody in the community calls "Father" So-and-so; and that title evidences the respect and the affection in which the patriarch is held by young and old alike. The patriotism of the monarchical peoples appears in its most favorable light when they call their emperor or their czar the Father of his folk, the Little Father, the Father of the people, the protector and preserver of the Fatherland. It is the highest title of respect and affection they can give. Here in America it is the man who was first in war and first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen whom we call the Father of his country, our first President, George Washington.

Abraham has two titles of greatest honor given to him in the Scriptures and in the regard of the race. He was called the Friend of God, and he has been called the Father of the faithful. Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians hold him in like reverence to this day because of these two things. He was the Friend of God and God granted him the great privilege of being the father according to the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth and of all the kings and prophets of Israel and of all the authors of the Jewish sacred books, of the whole Jewish nation and of all who following after him and them have had faith in God and in God's salvation. He had a namesake here in America, the Emancipator of a race, and the members of that race in great gratitude always have called him "Father Abraham," Lincoln the great President with the great heart. Father of a family, father of a community, father of the country, father of the people, father of a nation, father to a race—it is a title of respect and regard, of greatest reverence and love. It is this title which Jesus taught us to give to our God when we pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." He is The Father in a fuller sense than any earthly father ever can be.

IV. *Use by Jesus.* Jesus was no systematic theologian. We might say with a considerable degree of truth that the whole of his creed was to be found in this name for his God, Father. It is the first name we hear from his lips. His first words recorded in the Gospels are these, "Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"[3] Through all his ministry that is the name he most used. The Forerunner bore his testimony, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands,"[4] and thereafter the Son's testimony always was, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.[5] If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.[6] I am about my Father's business. All the works I do are my Father's works."

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[3] Luke 2. 49.

In the darkest hours of his life when he most needed sympathy and help, it was that name which came always to his lips, "O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."[7] "Father! forgive them; for they know not what they do,"[8] "Father! into thy hands I commend my spirit."[9] That was the last word he uttered upon the cross. As the first recorded words of his life were, "Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" the last recorded words before his death, according to Luke who gave us those first words, were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." As he lived, so he died; and as he lived and died we ought to live and die. He prayed as he lived; and as he prayed we ought to pray.

There are only five prayers of Jesus recorded in the Synoptics, and in four of these he addresses God as "Father." In the longest of them, in three verses, the name is repeated five times. "At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall will to reveal him."[10] Mark tells us that he began the Gethsemane petition with the words, "Abba, Father,"[11] and Matthew reports that he prayed twice and each time he began, saying, "O my Father,"[12] and Luke records the address in the one word, "Father."[13] In the fourth Gospel we are told that Jesus prayed at the tomb of Lazarus, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me,"[14] and at the time of the visit of the Greeks, "Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."[15] Then in the high-priestly prayer of the seventeenth chapter Jesus repeats the name "Father" six times.

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[4] John 3. 35.
[5] John 5. 19.
[6] John 10. 37.
[7] Matt. 26. 39.
[8] Luke 23. 34.
[9] Luke 23. 46.

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[10] Matt. 11. 25-27.

[11] Mark 14. 36.

[12] Matt. 26. 39, 42.

[13] Luke 22. 42.

[14] John 11. 41.

[15] John 12. 27, 28.

He never addressed God as Jehovah or the Eternal or the Almighty, as the Lord of Sabaoth or the Great Creator or the Majestic Ruler or the Omniscient Judge. He always said, "Father," "Abba, Father," "Holy Father," "Righteous Father." His speech was always concerning "the Father," "my Father," "my Father and your Father." The word "Father" as applied to God is found five times in the Gospel according to Mark, seventeen times in the Gospel according to Luke, forty-five times in the Gospel according to Matthew, and ninety times in the Gospel according to John. With the exception of a few passages the name is found only on the lips of Jesus. It was characteristic of his prayers and it was characteristic of his speech.

When Jesus told his disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven," it was not the first time they had heard that phrase. It occurs once in the Gospel according to Mark,[16] and once in the Gospel according to Luke,[17] and twenty times in the Gospel according to Matthew and ten times, or exactly half of the whole number, in the Sermon on the Mount.

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[16] Mark 11. 25.

[17] Luke 11. 13.

Jesus had told his disciples in this discourse to let their light shine, that men might see their good works and glorify the Father who is in heaven.[18] He had exhorted them to love their enemies and pray for those who persecuted them, that they might be sons of their Father who was in heaven.[19] He had said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."[20] The disciples knew what Jesus meant by the Fatherhood of God. They knew it from his prayers, and they knew it from his teaching; but they knew it best of all from his life.

This truth was the very center and soul of our Lord's message to men. All other doctrines were subordinate to this and were dependent upon this. With the emphasis and the importance Jesus gave to it, it came as a new revelation to the race. His own life was the perfect exemplification of his faith. He believed himself to be the Son of the living God. No child ever spoke to a parent in greater confidence that it would be heard, with more assurance of the parent's love, on terms of more intimate communion, than the man Jesus spoke to his Father in heaven.

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[18] Matt. 5. 16.

[19] Matt. 5. 45.

[20] Matt. 5. 48.

When he prayed, men listened with great wonder to the simplicity of his conversation with the invisible Friend, and they saw in his face and felt in his manner the power which came in instant answer.

When he was in trouble and in his greatest need, it was to the Father he looked for help and to him alone. In the agonies of Gethsemane and the tortures of crucifixion and under the crushing burden of the world's sin, it was to the Father he cried continuously. The heathen centurion there at the cross only voiced the clearer and clearer conviction of all who had known him through life when he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God."[21] Jesus maintained the ideal relationship of the child toward the Father in his unfailing reverence, confidence, obedience, freedom from anxiety, and frankness and fullness of personal intercourse and intimate communion through the whole of his life. He showed us how sons of the heavenly Father should live, in simple faith in the Father's love.

V. *Fatherhood of God.* It has been said that Jesus first taught the Fatherhood of God to men, and in a certain sense that is true. It is not true, however, that the conception of the divine Fatherhood was original with him.

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[21] Mark 15. 39.

The name "Father" for some divinity or for the supreme divinity occurs in many if not all the ancient faiths. Max Müller spent years of enthusiastic research in proving that all the ancient religions put the idea of the divine Fatherhood into their name for the deity, and he doubtless was right in his conclusions at this point. In so far there have been no false religions. They all have had this fundamental truth.

In the writings of Virgil we find a prayer beginning, *"Pater hominum Divumque, Eterna Potestas"*—"Father of gods and men, Eternal Power." Every student of mythology knows that the name "Jupiter" is a compound of "Jovis-pater," and corresponds to the Zeus-Pater of the Greeks. Homer sings,

"Such is the mind which dwells in the spirit of earth-born mortals,
As is their day which still the Father sendeth upon them."

Sophocles and Euripides gave Zeus the title "Father." In one of the ancient hymns of Accadia, as translated by Lenormant, we find the moon god Hurki addressed as "Father mine, of life the giver, cherishing, beholding all." Zoroaster called Mazda "the Father of truth and the Father of pure spirits in the beginning." An Egyptian prayer of the time of Rameses III addresses Ptah as the "Father of the gods." Paul quoted to the Athenians from one of their own poets, Aratus, those fine lines addressed to Zeus,

> "Offspring of thine are we too,
> We and all that is mortal around us."

Probably all men who have had any conception of God have had some dim notion that he was the Creator and Ruler and in that sense the Father of men, but this feeling of God's Fatherhood was not prominent or dominant in any former faith. Jesus took this universal faith and made it vital. He taught men that the Fatherhood of God meant that God was love and that his character and disposition toward men was kindly, paternal, real. In the other faiths the thought of the Fatherhood of God had occurred only in single and isolated passages in a whole sacred literature. Jesus brought it to the forefront and made it the foundation of all of his teaching. The peoples everywhere had crouched in fear before offended deities. The pagan temples everywhere were darkened and had been made to resound with the cries of tortured devotees and dying victims more often than with songs of praise. The deity dwelt behind some veil and was shrouded in incense and was satisfied and appeased with bloody sacrifice and rich offerings. Jesus brought religion out into the open and made it an affair of the daily life and the God he served and loved was the God of love and service to men, the Father who is in heaven.

There are a few passages in the Old Testament in which God is called a father, possibly seven or eight in all. In five of these passages God is represented as the Father of the Jewish nation. In only two of them is he represented as the Father of individuals. There are many names for God in the Old Testament books and those books represent the Jewish literature for many centuries, but the name "Father" seldom occurs and is in no sense characteristic of them. As in the Koran, which has ninety-nine different names for God, while the name "Father" is not to be found anywhere among them, so in the Old Testament we find God called the Eternal, the Creator, the Self-Existent, the great and dreadful God,[22] the God of heaven, the great and terrible God,[23] the Lord of Battles, the Lord of Hosts,[24] the Captain of the armies of heaven, the Mighty God, the Lord God,[25] the God of Israel,[26] the Judge, the King, and only on rare occasions and in widely isolated passages is he called the Father of men. The God of the Old Testament is a Lawgiver and a Monarch, and the Jews were his subjects rather than his children and friends.

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[22] Dan. 9. 4.

[23] Neh. 1. 5; 9. 32.

[24] 2 Sam. 7. 27.

[25] Gen. 15. 2.

[26] 1 Kings 8. 25.

In Deuteronomy we read, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee?"[27] Jeremiah pleaded with the people in the name of the Lord, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth? . . . Ye shall call me, My Father,"[28] and again, "I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn."[29] The prophet of the exile caught a glimpse of the truth when he said, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting,"[30] and again, "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."[31] Malachi asks, "Have we not all one Father?"[32] and in the name of Jehovah he said, "If then I be a Father, where is mine honor?"[33] We have about exhausted the passages in the Old Testament in which the name "Father" is applied to God. Other titles, such as the Lord, the Lord God, the Lord Jehovah, the God of Abraham, the Holy One of Israel, are common and characteristic, while the name "Father" seldom is found.

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[27] Deut. 32. 6.

[28] Jer. 3. 4, 19.

[29] Jer. 31. 9.

[30] Isa. 63. 16.

[31] Isa. 64. 8.

[32] Mal. 2. 10.

[33] Mal. 1. 6.

There are some passages in which the thought of the divine Fatherhood is expressed, although the name is not used. The psalmist said, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,"[34] and in another psalm we read, "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."[35] Hosea put past history into his prophecy when he said, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."[36] In these passages God is the Father of the nation rather than of individuals and it is only when we come into the writings of the Apocrypha that we find the personal relationship emphasized. When David saw the rich gifts made for the building of the Temple, he blessed God and said, "Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever!"[37] This clause has been translated, "O Jehovah, the God of

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[34] Psa. 103. 13.

[35] Psa. 68. 5.

[36] Hos. 11. 1.

[37] 1 Chron. 29. 10.

Israel our father," which, of course, would remove it from this list of the Old Testament ascriptions of the name "Father" to God himself. However, the thought occurs in the preceding chapter when David says to the people, "Jehovah said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts; for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father."[38]

The second book of Chronicles closed the Old Testament canon of our Lord's day and the Apocryphal books never were added to it, but they were read and reverenced, and Jesus probably was influenced by them as well as by the canonical writings. He may have read in Tobit, "He is our Lord. He is the God our Father forever."[39] In the Book of Wisdom he may have read, "He pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his Father,"[40] and again, "But thy providence, O Father, governeth the ship."[41] In the Book of Ecclesiasticus he may have found the statement, "I called upon the Lord, the Father of my Lord,"[42] and he may also have found the direct address in prayer, "O Lord, Father and Master of my whole life.

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[38] 1 Chron. 28. 6.

[39] Tobit 13. 4.

[40] Wisd. 2. 16.

[41] Wisd. 14. 3.

[42] Ecclus. 51. 10.

. . . O Lord, Father and God of my life."[43] The idea of the Fatherhood of God was there in the Old Testament and in the Apocryphal books, but it does not occur frequently and continuously as in the New Testament and it is a most remarkable fact that in all the Old Testament prayers of believing Jews, even among the many prayers of David, the man after God's own heart, there is not one which begins, "Our Father," or "Our Father who art in heaven."

That was not the dominant conception of God until Jesus came among men. Moses never had ventured to use this name in prayer. David never had dared to approach God with this title. The most evangelical of the prophets never had presumed upon such familiarity. Jesus taught all men to say, "Our Father." In the New Testament it is this title which becomes most prominent. It occurs in the Gospels one hundred times and in the apostolic writings just as frequently. In the three years of the public ministry of Jesus he probably set forth the truth of the Fatherhood of God more frequently than it had occurred in all the literatures either of the Jewish or the other nations since the world began. If he was not the discoverer of this truth, it became his by the thoroughness of his appropriation and the very abundance of its occurrence in his teaching.

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[43] Ecclus. 23, 1, 4.

In the first book of the Old Testament canon we read, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am the God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect."[44] In the first book of the New Testament canon, in this Sermon on the Mount, Jesus repeats that command to all his disciples, "Be thou perfect," but there is a noteworthy change in the Divine title used in that connection. It is no longer, "I am the Almighty God; be thou perfect," but Jesus said, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."[45] When God appeared to Moses in the wilderness and spoke to him from the burning bush, he commanded him to go down to Pharaoh to bring the children of Israel out from their bondage in Egypt. Then we read that Moses said unto God, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" Then God made answer, "I AM THAT I AM," and he said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord,

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[44] Gen. 17. 1.

[45] Matt. 5. 48.

God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. I AM hath sent me unto you. This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations,"[46] That was characteristic of the old dispensation. God was the unchangeable, the self-existent, independent of time or place or cause, the ever-living One, I AM THAT I AM; that was sufficient for them to know and believe. That was the God they were to reverence and worship.

While the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus the Christ. The children of Israel had become ensnared in a worse bondage than that of Egypt, a bondage to slavish ceremonialism, a bondage to legalities and technicalities, a spiritual thralldom of mind and heart. Then a second Moses, a great deliverer and redeemer, was sent to the race. They asked him as they had asked Moses, "Who hath sent you unto us?" and he answered their questioning not as Moses or any of the prophets of the old dispensation had answered. He did not say, "Jehovah hath sent me, I AM THAT I AM is his name, the God who dwelleth between the cherubim, the great and incomprehensible Creator of the universe, the Almighty, the Eternal." He said persistently and continuously, "The Father, my Father, your Father. I am come in my Father's name. The living Father hath sent me. The works which I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. Do you ask, Who art thou? Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. He that hath sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone. I do always those things which please the Father." That was the message of Jesus to men, "God is a Father. I am his Son. You may be the children of God."

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[46] Exod. 3. 13-15.

That makes the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is the difference between starlight and sunlight, between servitude and sonship, between Sinai and the Sermon on the Mount. It is that one word "Father" which makes the difference. The gladness of that revelation runs through all the New Testament books. What did John say? "He came unto his own and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name."[47] What did Paul write to the Ephesians? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, having foreordained us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."[48]

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[47] John 1. 11, 12.

What did he write to the Galatians? "God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."[49] What did he write to the Romans? "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."[50] This is the first and last, the fundamental and the crowning revelation of the gospel taught us by Jesus. It is the most glorious truth the race has come to know, that when we pray we can say, "Our Father who art in heaven."

VI. *Heaven.* Jesus told us to pray, "Our

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[48] Eph. 1. 3, 5.
[49] Gal. 4. 4-6.
[50] Rom. 8. 14-17.

Father," and then he told us to add, "who art in heaven." He himself prayed, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,"[51] and we are told that when he wrought his astonishing miracles he "looked up to heaven" as the source of his power,[52] and when he prayed at the tomb of Lazarus, and again in the upper room, he "lifted up his eyes to heaven."[53] He seemed to think of the Father as enthroned and at home in the heavens and he taught us to think of him there. Why did he ask us to remember always that our Father was in heaven? Why did he ask us to think of the heavens whenever we thought of the Father? Did he associate the two so that we might never look upon the heavens without thinking of the Father? John Ruskin believed with the psalmist that the heavens declared the glory of God and the firmament showed his handiwork, and he said, "All these passings to and fro of fruitful shower and grateful shade, and all those visions of silver palaces built about the horizon, and noises of moaning winds and threatening thunders, and glories of colored robe and cloven ray, are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance and distinctness and dearness of the simple words, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' "

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[51] Matt. 11. 25. Luke 10. 21.

[52] Matt. 14. 19. Mark 6. 41; 7. 34. Luke 9. 16.

[53] John 11. 41; 17. 1.

The heavens above us always have been to men the visible symbol of the infinite and the exalted. They extend beyond the reach of human eye and stellar telescope. They are filled with worlds innumerable, the vastness of whose orbits bewilders man's mind. There in the infinite blue, there in the invisible glory, there in the perfect peace, there in the purity of the starry sky, there on the throne of unchangeable power, our Father listens for our prayer; and when we pray to him we turn our face upward and we try to lift our thoughts toward the infinite and with all reverence for the immutable majesty and the unapproachable glory we say, "Our Father *who art in heaven,* hallowed be thy name."

Heaven is the symbol of infinite order, unchangeable being, spotless purity, perfect peace, and unapproachable power. When we say, "Our Father who art in heaven," we mean that our God is the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity, into whose presence we come with all reverence and awe, and yet in all faith that he will condescend to dwell with every contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones. Our confidence and our reverence are united in this address. "Our Father!"—that brings God very near. "Who art in heaven"—that removes him very far. "Our Father who art in heaven"—that preserves the due balance between familiarity and fear or awe. Our God is enthroned in the heavens and he rules over all, but this Sovereign exalted and supreme is our Father, and he will hear and answer our prayer if we address him in the proper, heavenly frame of mind and attitude of soul.

An old writer has reminded us that God "is not to be found in any earthly or in any hellish mood of our soul, but only in the heavenly—that is, in the holy and pure and charitable and true. Hence the soul is taught to purge herself of all malice and wickedness when she nameth the name of God; that she must dwell in her heaven, if she would hold communion with God, who dwelleth in his heaven; that she must be girt about with her best and holiest attributes, if she would have access to the pure and holy abode of him whom she seeketh." We are his children. Our Father is in heaven. He who would pray to the Father must fix his affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

It is a shame for us who are some time to sit with him on his throne to be groveling always about his footstool. *Sursum corda!* up with the heart, when we would speak with the Father; for he is in heaven, and he who says, "Our Father who art in heaven," must lift his thought and soul heavenward, or the words will be empty of meaning to him and the prayer a vain repetition and nothing more than that. That old knight Sir Richard Baker said, "Although our feet be fastened to the earth and cannot ascend, yet our hearts are at liberty and may—and they must indeed—ascend, if we will truly pray: for this ascending of the soul in praying is the soul of praying."[54] The word "heaven" and the word "heave" are closely related. Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers thought of heaven as that life or state of life which was heaved to the greatest height of glory and bliss. The Greek word for "heaven" comes from a root which means "to rouse or stir up." Physical altitude has been made the type of the purest and the noblest and the best. We speak of high principles, high standards, high aims. The Jews built their synagogues upon the hills and their Temple upon Mount Zion. Jesus so often went up into the mountains to pray. His favorite oratory was found there nearest the skies. There the earth was beneath his feet and heaven was close at hand. There low thoughts and earthly ambitions were out of place and high thoughts and heavenly aspirations were natural to the soul seeking communion with the Father in heaven. There it seemed comparatively easy to heave up the flagging spirits till they came again into touch with heavenly power.

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[54] Sir Richard Baker, *On the Lord's Prayer*, p. 19.

In the same way every Christian must lift up his thought and stir up his spirit and heave up his heart into the heavenly frame of mind and soul before he can pray with any power to the Father who is in heaven. He must claim and abide in his heavenly citizenship. His heart and home will be in heaven even while he is here on earth. He will have a heaven to go to heaven in.

He will know that "the treasures of earth are not to be compared to the treasures of heaven, the joys of earth are nothing in comparison with the bliss of the spirits of the redeemed in heaven, the favor of men is not to be compared with the grace and the favor of God, the most entrancing music here below is not to be compared with the hallelujahs of the heavenly choir, and the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Is our Father in heaven? Then we will long after nothing so much as after the heaven where he is and the mansions which he has prepared for us, and oftentimes we will feel that we would gladly now be Overcomers, gladly now receive the crown, the palm, the white raiment, the harp of final victory. Day after day we will lift up our eyes to the hills whence cometh our help, to the heavens from which we expect the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and where some time we will forget the heaven of heavens in the presence of our Father who is in heaven and above all things we will love him and adore him, for we shall see him as he is."[55] There he will be to us "True Light, Full Satiety, Everlasting Joy, Pleasure Consummated, and Perfect Happiness."

Are all of these things figures of speech and inadequate to express the great reality? We use them as figures and accept their aid as far as it goes to clear our conceptions and to maintain our sense of the realities these figures so feebly present. We know that the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, and that his throne and his home are not to be found in any particular place. We know that our Lord is not now in the physical heavens above us any more than he is anywhere else in the universe, and we know that he will not come to us again out of these visible heavens but in invisible conquest over the hearts and the governments of men. We know that heaven is no limited locality but a condition of heart and mind. We know that heaven is the home of eternal holiness and that the cloudless sky is only a symbol of the purity of that state into which there shall in no wise enter anything which defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. We know that heaven is the home of eternal happiness and that the peace and the order of the heavenly bodies above us simply symbolize the condition in which God shall wipe away all tears and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.

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[55] Arndt, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Our Father who art in heaven! the words are inadequate; but can we ever say them without feeling? Can we ever say them without any realization of their suggestiveness? Can we ever say them without having our soul flooded with adoration and praise? Can we ever say them without a spiritual vision of infinite power and purity and peace and glory and light, all accessible to us and pledged to our possession in our Father's love? Heaven's king is our Father still, and he hearkens to his children's prayer. There are ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands whose hallelujahs resound through the courts of heaven, but through it all his ear can hear the cry of his weakest child. He sits in the midst of the jubilee song and the trumpet sound of the heavenly choir, but he hears the sigh of every needy one, he hears the whispered prayer of any spirit lifted up from the earth to the Father who is in heaven. Our Father is *in heaven.* The Supreme Majesty is enthroned on high. "Before the resplendent glory of light which streams forth from his Presence the seraphim veil their faces and bow their heads in awe. There are to be heard only the adoring songs of the angelic hosts and the harp music of the redeemed and glorified saints. There principalities and powers lay their crowns in the dust and every knee is bent and every tongue proclaims that this is the King of kings and the Lord of lords."[56] We would not rush into the presence of any earthly monarch with inconsiderate haste and with unconsidered speech. Surely we ought to approach the Supreme Monarch of the universe with due reverence and awe.

The easy familiarity which some modern evangelists affect in their public prayers to

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[56] Krekeler, Vaterunser, p. 34.

God would be resented by their equals or even their inferiors on earth. They would not dare to address the mayor, the governor, or the President with the same freedom which they exercise in their speech with the Deity. The Old Testament Preacher had no sympathy with such presumption. He said, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything unto God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth."[57] The Psalmist had no sympathy with such affectation of familiarity. He said, "Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."[58]

Is this feeling of reverence for God characteristic of the Old Testament and is it outgrown in the clearer revelation of God's Fatherhood in the New Testament? Peter did not think so. He wrote, "If ye call him Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear."[59] Peter understood the Master's teaching. God is our Father, and therefore very near to us. He is our Father in heaven, and therefore infinitely exalted above us. He is our Father whom we may approach in filial confidence and love. He is the Father in heaven whom we must approach always with fitting reverence and awe. It was Archbishop Leighton who said, "There was some such thing spoken of Augustus the great Roman emperor, but it is most true of the Divine Majesty, that they who dare speak rashly to him know not his greatness, and they who dare not speak to him, provided it be with due reverence and respect, know not his goodness."

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[57] Eccl. 5. 2.

[58] Psa. 89. 6, 7.

[59] 1 Pet. 1. 17.

That is the lesson of this Address taught us by Jesus. Our confidence is to be mingled with reverence and our reverence is to be mingled with confidence. Our God is our Father who is in heaven. We would not present a petition to any great authority upon the earth without carefully considering the phrasing of it and the most suitable manner of its presentation. We would not jeopardize its favorable reception by any lack of respect toward the one whose power we besought in our behalf. Shall we approach our Father who is in heaven with indifference of manner or coldness of heart or careless and wandering thought or meaningless and vain repetition of formal phrases instead of reverent and earnest supplication?

Reverence is not the predominant characteristic of this age either in worship or in anything else. For that reason we ought to be all the more careful that neither the manner nor the matter of our prayers savor of irreverence toward our Father who is in heaven. Let us remember who and what he is, all that the Old Testament said of him; the Creator of the universe, "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. . . . It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing; that maketh the judges of the earth as vanity."[60]

The New Testament revelation has not abrogated this revelation. These things are just as true of our God to-day as they ever were. We must not so emphasize the Fatherhood of God as to lose sight of his Authority and Dominion, his Sovereignty and Glory, his

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[60] Isa. 40. 12, 22, 23.

Almightiness and Majesty, his infinite Purity and his eternal Power. Jesus joined the two revelations of the Old Testament and of the New Testament when he told us to pray to our Father who was in heaven. The heavenly Monarch is to be reverenced and feared. The heavenly Father is to be trusted and loved. "His strong arm bears the great world-weight; but in the great he does not forget the smallest one. His hand appoints the heavenly hosts to their several courses; but he also counts the grains of sand which lie along the shore of the sea. He rules the fates of the peoples; he overthrows the mighty from their thrones; he exalts and abases the nations: but with the most tender providence and fidelity he cares for every wandering child of man, he holds him as in his right hand and guides him with his counsel. He turns and overturns as he will among the governments of men, but in the midst of the thunder of the battle his angels hold their shields over those who trust in him."[61]

He is the Almighty God, but he is our Father too. Our Father who is in heaven sits upon the seat of power. There is no limit to his dominion, and all of his Omnipotence is pledged in our behalf. If the Almighty God is our Father and Friend we can say, "I can lie down and sleep in perfect quietude of mind and soul, and I can wake up in peace; for the Lord sustains me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, who have set themselves against me round about." Of course not! If God be for us, of whom need we be afraid? This is our supreme consolation that He to whom we pray can answer every prayer, and his Omnipotence is available in our need.

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[61] Krekeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

Our earthly fathers often are willing to help and to give, but they are not able. They may desire to give and have nothing to give. They may be willing to help, and yet not find it possible. They may be anxious to protect, while they find that they themselves need protection; but "where is there a necessity or a perplexity where the arm of the Lord is too short to save? Is it hunger? He can make bread out of stones; he can send ravens to provide for his prophet; with five barley loaves he can satisfy five thousand men. Is it poverty? All the treasures of the earth are his; he gives it to whom he will; and he never allows his children to want. Is it sickness? Go tell every doubting disciple that the blind see and the lame walk and the dead are raised to life again. Is it godly sorrow about your own soul? He can take away the stony heart and give you a heart of flesh to walk in the way of his commandments. Is it fear of any spiritual or temporal enemies? The angels of the Lord encamp round about them that fear him and deliver them. There is absolutely nothing one can name which can limit the power of our God to save. He is a God who to-day works wonders, if with confidence of faith we say to him, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' "

If we say "Our Father" in faith, we have practically prayed the whole of this prayer; for if we claim God as our Father, we profess to be his children and all the petitions of this prayer are in effect that we may be worthy children of our Father in heaven, hallowing his name, hastening his kingdom, doing his will, depending upon him for daily bread, forgiven of our sins, rescued in temptation, and delivered from evil. If we can say "Our Father" in faith, then our faith can take hold upon him for the answer to all these petitions. Our Father will cause his name to be hallowed and his kingdom to come and his will to be done. He can and will give us daily bread and forgiveness. He will not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil. He is able to do it. None can hinder him.

He is our Father in heaven, Omnipotent

Love.[62] Believing that, we can sing with that little silk weaver in the streets of Asolo,

> "God's in his heaven—
> All's right with the world!"

Believing that, we can affirm with the psalmist, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."[63] Believing that, we can agree with the statement of Jesus that if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, much more will our Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him,[64] "When Reason cries, 'If God were the loving Father of whom you speak, he could not endure the misery of his children; his heart would break,' we answer, 'Yes, of course it does break; look at the cross.' "[65] Jesus of the broken heart was the revelation to us of the broken heart of the Father of love. Is it true that God is our Father? Then we can have faith that the old prophet was right when he said that a woman may forget her infant child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb, but our Father never will forget us.[66] Luther said about the address to this prayer, Our Father who art in heaven, "If I could understand these few words and believed them, that the God who created the heaven and the earth and all things that in them are, and holds them in his hand and power, was my Father, then I would be assured within myself that I too would be a lord of heaven and earth. Also, Christ would be my brother, and all things would be mine. Gabriel would be my servant, Raphael my messenger, and all the angels ministers to my necessities, given to me of my Father who is in heaven." Luther realized that faith in sufficient measure to defy the Pope and the Emperor, and the Father did not fail him until he had freed the Christian Church from its Babylonian captivity and restored it to something of the simplicity of personal communion with God experienced in the life and work of Jesus.

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[62] Rom. 8. 28.

[63] Psa. 103. 13.

[64] Matt. 7. 11.

[65] Temple, *New Faith and Modern Thought*, p. 169.

[66] Isa. 49. 15.

He taught his disciples to say: "Are we the children of God? Then we can cast our care upon him, for he careth for us. Are we the children of God? Then we know that the Father himself loveth us.[67] Are we the children of God? Then we can come with all boldness to the throne of his grace that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.[68] Are we the children of God? Then we can be assured that our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of all these things.[69] Is God our Father? Then he will make all things work together for our good, sickness and health, bounty and want, affliction and blessing.[70] Is God our Father? Then with the Lord our Redeemer he will give us richly all things to enjoy.[71] Are we sure of our adoption? Then it matters not what may befall us in life, we shall know that all is well."

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[67] John 16. 27.

Earthly goods may be snatched from us, but we can bless God that the best things cannot be taken away. We may be brought to poverty; but Jesus our Brother, who became poor for our sakes, has taught us, "Blessed are the poor,"[72] and his brother James has reminded us that we may be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom of God.[73] Our health may be taken, but our hearts will be whole. Our goods may be spoiled, but we can rejoice that we have ourselves for a better possession and an abiding one.[74]

Sorrows may come and our eyes may be

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[68] Heb. 4. 16.

[69] Matt. 6. 32.

[70] Rom. 8. 28.

[71] Rom. 8. 32.

[72] Luke 6. 20.

[73] James 2. 5.

[74] Heb. 10. 34.

dimmed with weeping, but Jesus has told us, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted," even as those whom the Father comforteth with consolations divine.[75] Our heart and our flesh may falter and fall, but God will be the strength of our heart and our portion forever.[76] God is our Father. Therefore, if blessings come, we will be thankful for them; and we will know that it is the Father's love. If troubles come, we will be patient under them; and we will know that it is the Father's will. God is our Father. Therefore, if we are poor in spirit, humbly trusting the Father's bounty for everything, he will give us the kingdom of heaven here and now. If we are worthy children, pure in heart, he will give us to see him here and now. If we are the children of God, we are rich as long as we live and richer when we die. If we are the children of God, death is only the gateway to the Father's home.

Did that little one die in our household? It was taken to the Father and lives in his love before his throne. Have our friends died one by one? They have gone home to the Father and are at rest with him now. Will we die? It will be like the return of the prodigal from the far country filled with sin and fearful want; for the Father will come out to meet us and we will be robed in the white robe of his righteousness and we will go in with him to the feast of love. This faith which accepts every providence as a good providence since it comes from a Father's hand, is quaintly put in his seventeenth-century style by Sir Richard Baker, "If thou diest in thy youth, thou dost but go the sooner to God that thou mayest be the longer with him. If thou diest for hunger, thou dost but go fasting to God that thou mayest have a better stomach to the heavenly banquet. If thou perish for want of clothes, thou dost but go naked to God that thou mayest be the readier for putting on the wedding garment. If thou die with torment, thou dost but follow Christ to God that having followed him here, the sheep before the shearer, thou mayest follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth."[77] The spirit of faith in the Father will be dauntless in any disaster, triumphant over any trial, satisfied with all the good things of the Father in any situation earth may afford. Is God our Father? Then he will give us life here and hereafter, love here and in heaven, his grace in time and his glory in eternity. Is God our Father? Then we are sure of our daily bread, forgiveness of our sins, salvation in temptation, deliverance from all evil, and the inheritance of the Father's kingdom and power and glory for ever and ever.

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[75] Matt. 5. 4.

[76] Psa. 73. 26.

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[77] Sir Richard Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

This is the doctrine of the Address in the model prayer. Shall we not say it more thoughtfully hereafter? Shall we not lift our souls upward, upward, upward when we pray to him? Shall we not remember our Father's infinite purity, peace, and power? Shall we not remember that the King of kings on Heaven's throne, the Omnipotent One, is our Father and our Friend, and bow before him with inexpressible gratitude and adoration, with all the reverence and all the confidence due to him?

VII. *Conclusion.* This, then, is the conclusion of the matter: One is our Father, even God. He is a God of love whose providence and whose grace encompass all alike without regard to moral or other distinctions. His Fatherly solicitude and care and love are shown toward every living soul. The teaching of Jesus always was, "God is your Father, the Father of you publicans and you sinners as well as of you Pharisees and you saints. Will you all come unto him and accept of his love and his bounty, his goodness and grace? All of you are brethren in the same misfortune and necessity and sorrow and sin; will you not be brethren in Christian love? Then you can pray to God as your Father; and you will not pray, 'My Father, bless me alone,' but you will pray, 'Our Father, give to us all those things we all need.' "

When ye pray, say, "Our Father who art in heaven"! That form of address calls into play the three Christian graces. "Father," that expresses our faith; the "Father in heaven" embodies all our hope; the word "Our" sets forth all-inclusive love. Faith, hope, love—these three lift us from our low estate to heaven's gate. Faith, hope, love—these admit us to all the treasures of glory and of grace.

This form of address teaches the three necessary attitudes of mind and soul with which men must approach God. "Father" implies faith and confidence and trust. "Father in heaven" suggests reverence and awe. "Our" insists upon brotherly love. We must come to God in all reverence and with all faith and with hearts filled with love to all the brethren, if we expect our prayers to be heard by him.

This form of address answers the three greatest questions ever occupying the mind of man, the three fundamental questions of all religion, ethics, politics, and philosophy: what is the relation of God to man, what is the relation of man to God, what is the relation of man to man? This form of address seems inexhaustible in the richness of its suggestiveness. We may not follow out these lines of thought any further at this time. We turn now to the first petition, "Hallowed be thy name."

PART THREE

THE FIRST PETITION

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THE FIRST PETITION

I. *First in importance.* It is first in order and first in importance. It summarizes the first three commandments of the Decalogue. The first commandment declared that the first necessity laid upon men was the recognition of the fact that God was to have no rival in their worship, was to claim their whole devotion, was to reign supreme. The second commandment warned all worshipers of the one God that they should not degrade their spiritual conception of him by any attempt to image him in material things. The third commandment forbade the profanation of his name. This first petition includes the third commandment explicitly and the first and second commandments implicitly in its scope. They must all be obeyed in order to hallow God's name.

Sir Richard Baker calls this the "prayer of the angels," "For when it is said, Hallowed be thy name, may it not justly be thought the prayer of angels? of whom it is said, that they say and sing continually, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,' not only say it as their prayer but sing it as their psalm and chief delight,"[1] and he suggests that this Hallelujah may be called *"Canticum Canticorum,* the 'Song of Songs'; not only because it is sung without ceasing, but because it shall be sung without ending, and is both the cause and the effect, both the sign and the substance of our eternal happiness."[2] With that address, "Our Father who art in heaven," the soul lifts itself into the very presence of God. It stands before his holiness and his majesty. What shall it say first? Shall it ask for the relief of its necessities, the easing of its pains, the forgiveness of its sins, the welfare of itself or of its friends? No, these things can wait. Its first impulse is to join in the Hallelujah Chorus of heaven. "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious NAME; evermore praising thee and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory; glory be to thee, O Lord most high."

Bishop Heber realized the impression of the sinful soul before its Creator and put it into his verse,

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[1] Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[2] Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

"Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
Only thou art holy, there is none beside thee
Perfect in power, in love, and purity."

Charles Wesley phrased the feeling of the regenerated and purified soul,

"Holy as thou, O Lord, is none;
Thy holiness is all thy own:
A drop of that unbounded sea
Is ours, a drop derived from thee.

"And when thy purity we share,
Thy only glory we declare;
And humbled into nothing own,
Holy and pure is God alone."

It is the eternal hallelujah chorus of the skies. Some of the other petitions of this model prayer will be out of date when we get to heaven. We shall not need to pray for daily bread where we shall neither hunger nor thirst any more. We shall not need to pray for forgiveness of our trespasses in the continuous purity of the skies. We may not need to pray not to be led into temptation when our probation is ended and earthly temptation has ceased. We may not need to pray for deliverance from evil when that prayer has been finally answered in the safe refuge of heaven. However, God's name will be hallowed in heaven forever. This prayer never will come to an end. We pray that God's name may be hallowed here and now as it is hallowed now in heaven and as it will be hallowed by us for evermore.

In the *Catechism* published by the Council of Trent the attention of the faithful is called to the fact that that phrase, "as in heaven, so on earth" belongs to all three of the petitions with which the model prayer begins, and not to the third of them alone. R. G. Moulton agrees with this conclusion and says that the translation into English ought to be presented in the envelope form, as follows:

> Our Father who art in heaven,
> Hallowed be thy name,
> Thy kingdom come,
> Thy will be done,
> On earth as it is in heaven.

He says: "It belongs to the envelope structure that all the parallel clauses are to be connected with the common opening and close. The meaning thus becomes: Hallowed be thy name on earth as it is in heaven. Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is something more than literary beauty which is gained by this change."[3] The gain is in the realization that heaven sets the standard and furnishes the atmosphere for the fulfillment of all these petitions as well as of the third of them; and that now we can begin with that provision of the eternal chorus of praise in heaven as we pray that God's name may be hallowed on earth now as it is and always will be in heaven.

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[3] Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible*, pp. 69-70.

Does it seem strange to any one that we dependent creatures should begin our supplications not for our personal needs but for the greater glory of the All-Sufficient One? If we were conscious of animal needs alone, we surely would begin with a prayer for daily bread. If we were conscious not only of animal needs but also of moral delinquency, we surely would begin with a prayer for the forgiveness of our sins, for that would be more important to us in the presence of God than the assurance of provision for our merely physical necessities. Yet Jesus taught us to defer all requests for ourselves until we had made some requests for the greater glory of God. He told us to begin by saying, "Hallowed be thy name."

Is it strange that we should so begin? Is it not rather the natural and intuitive impulse of all who approach the Most High? That hush which falls upon all who cross the threshold of the sanctuary, the head bowed in awe, the knee bent in reverence, the hymns sung to God's praise, are not all of these witnesses to our desire that God's name may be hallowed first of all? We make it the first business of the first day of the week. There are seven days in the week, and we Christians dedicate the first of them to the service of God. There are six petitions in the model prayer, but Jesus told us that the first of them must be for the hallowing of God's name. As the blessed influence of the Sunday atmosphere is to be carried into all the business of the other days of the week, the hallowing influence of this first petition is to be carried into all the other petitions of the prayer. They are all offered to the further hallowing of God's name.

The first and great commandment was that we love the Lord our God with all our heart. That commandment included all the rest, for love is the fulfilling of the whole law., So the first and great petition is that God's name may be hallowed, and that petition includes all the rest. It involves the reception of the kingdom into our hearts and the doing of God's will and trust in him for bread and forgiveness and deliverance from evil. He who begins with a genuine hallowing of God's name will be sure to have all these other good gifts and to end with deliverance from all evil. Did not the Old Testament say that the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom? A wise prayer, then, will begin with the hallowing of God's name.

Did not Jesus tell us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all other things would be added unto us? We begin, therefore, with this prayer for the hallowing of God's name, assured that all good things will be added in due order. Jesus said we should begin with reverence to God, that first things should be put first, that God's glory should precede man's need in our thought and in our petition. We follow his prescription, in this fundamental petition; for all our other petitions are useless unless God is holy and we are ready to hallow his name. It would be mockery to pray for forgiveness of sins to any but a holy God. It would be profitless to ask anything at the hand of the holy God unless we were ready to begin with the hallowing of his name.

II. *The Name.* God's name is the revelation of God's self. Every name ought to represent the very essence of the thing or person named. We understand that to be the meaning of that portion of the Genesis story of Eden in which we are told that God brought every beast of the field and every fowl of the air to Adam to see what he would call them, and that Adam gave names to all the creatures of God's hand. We understand that the writer of that narrative thought that in the clear vision and the unclouded intellect of Eden, Adam was able to see at a glance the distinguishing characteristic of every creature which passed before him and that thus he was able to give to it a name which the very sight of it naturally would suggest, its rightful and essential designation.

We scarcely can realize what a gigantic undertaking and what a superlatively marvelous accomplishment that narrative suggests to us. Suppose we should try to give new and suitable names to every object which might meet our eye in a morning walk. We would begin to stumble and halt and probably would find ourselves utterly at a loss after the tenth or the twentieth name. Our originating powers soon would begin to flag. Our inventive genius soon would be exhausted. Our vocabulary soon would run out. An exceptionally brilliant mind might furnish a few hundreds or even thousands of new and suitable names, but no man among us could begin to do what the book of Genesis says that Adam did.

For the most part we name things now with pure arbitrariness, or at best from external resemblance and unessential and accidental considerations. We call a rose a rose, but it would smell as sweet by any other name. Yet even these arbitrary names, when we have become thoroughly acquainted with them, suggest to us the things themselves; and the mere mention of them calls the mental image of the things before our eyes. We speak of a rose and the color and fragrance and form of the flower are at once suggested to us. So the name of God is intended to be a revelation of God's self to us. Like those names of the Eden narrative, the name of God stands to us for the very being and essence of the Divine. All the names we have for God have been revealed to us from God himself, and what God names himself God is.

All through the Scripture we find God's name used to represent God himself. To the Jew, "to speak for God was to speak in his Name, Deut. 18. 19, 20; to praise God was to bless his Name, Psa. 96. 2; 100. 4; 145. 1, 21; to worship God is to call upon his Name, Gen. 4. 26; 12. 8; Psa. 79. 6; 105. 1; 116. 4, 13, 17; Isa. 64. 7; Jer. 10. 25; Zeph. 3. 9; to serve God is to love his Name, Psa. 5. 11; 69. 36; 119. 132, while the place where God met his people in the convocations of sacred worship was the place where he chose to put his Name there, Deut. 12. 5; 16. 2; 26. 2. The psalmist said, 'They who know *thy Name* will put their trust in *Thee,'* Psa. 9. 10."[4] To know the Name was to know God himself, and they who knew him would trust him.

When the psalmist said, "They that love his Name shall dwell therein,"[5] he meant, "They that love thee shall dwell therein." When the psalmist said, "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee,"[6] he meant, "The God of Jacob defend thee." When Nehemiah prayed, "O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy Name,"[7] he meant, "who desire to fear thee." When Moses said, "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, thy Lord, thy God,"[8] he meant, "that thou mayest fear the glorious and fearful God."

To blaspheme the Name[9] was to speak against Jehovah himself. Zechariah promised that those who trusted in the Lord and did right should be strengthened in the Lord and should walk up and down in his Name;[10] and walking up and down in his name meant walking and living in the sense of security which God himself would give. When the writer of Proverbs said, "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe,"[11] he meant that the righteous found safety in the strength of the Lord himself.

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[4] Thirtle, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 84.

[5] Psa. 69. 36.

[6] Psa. 20. 1.

[7] Neh. 1. 11.

[8] Deut. 28. 58.

[9] Lev. 24. 11, 16.

When Jacob wrestled there at the brook Jabbok with his unknown adversary until the break of day and then made a request of this mighty wrestler, "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name,"[12] he wanted to know the essential character of his antagonist. Was it wrath or was it love? "Tell me, I pray thee, thy Name." It has been the cry of the race from the beginning, "O God, we would know thy character, thy essential being, thyself. Tell us, we pray thee, thy Name." Jesus came in answer to that cry; and in his high-priestly prayer in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel according to John he did not say, "O Father, I have revealed thee unto men," but, falling into line with the Jewish custom as found in the Old

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[10] Zech. 10. 12.
[11] Prov. 18. 10.
[12] Gen. 32. 29.

Testament, he said, "O Father, I have manifested thy Name unto the men that thou gavest me. I have declared unto them thy Name,"[13] and that meant that he had revealed to men that God was love and that their best name for him was "Father." In this prayer, prescribed for his disciples, he does not tell them to say, "Hallowed be God," but, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name." To confess the name of God, to praise the name of God, to hallow the name of God, to glorify the name of God, is to confess and praise and hallow and glorify God himself.

God is not the great Anonymous of the universe, the Force behind all other forces, an incomprehensible Influence, undefined and unknowable and impersonal. He has chosen to reveal himself. He has said, "My people shall know my Name."[14] God commissioned Moses to deliver the children of Israel from the Egyptian bondage and he said to him, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. . . . The Lord, God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my Name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."[15] Later, Moses went up into Mount Sinai and Jehovah stood with him there and proclaimed the name of Jehovah, as the narrative reads, and the name proclaimed was, "The Lord, The Lord, God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty."[16]

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[13] John 17. 6, 26.

[14] Isa. 52. 6.

That was the revelation of God's nature and character to his ancient people, and other names were given them to help them realize more clearly who and what he was. Jehovah-Elohim was the creator-redeemer of the race, the Maker and Master of all standing in covenant relation to his people. Jehovah-jireh was God providing a ransom even in the person of his Son. Jehovah-rophi was the Physician, the Lord the Healer of his afflicted ones. Jehovah-nissi was the Lord under whose Banner his children might fight unto victory. Jehovah-zidkenu was the Lord our Righteousness. Jehovah-shalom was the Lord our Peace. Jehovah-shammah was the Lord revealed in visible glory in the restored Jerusalem.

Westcott says that "the three chief stages in the history of the Old Testament are characterized in broad outline by the names under which God was pleased to make himself known in each," and then he gives the three names which mark the three stages as follows: first, El-Shaddai, the Almighty One, revealed to Abraham as the One able to raise up a great nation from one man and him as good as dead; and, second, Jehovah entering into covenant with his chosen people; and then, third, Jehovah-sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts, Ruler, Conqueror, King. These are the Old Testament names for God, and they all contain revelations of the nature and character of God. Yet we feel that they all are necessarily inadequate.

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[15] Exod. 3. 14, 15.

[16] Exod. 34. 6, 7.

"Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power
That mortals ever knew,
That angels ever bore;
All are too mean to speak his worth,
Too mean to set his glories forth!"

The highest and best revelation of God was made through his Son, and Jesus gave us a new name for God. He told us to call him, "Our Father who art in heaven," and it was with this name that he himself prayed to him, "Father, Righteous Father, Holy Father." The psalmist had said, "Holy and reverend is his Name."[17] Jesus called him, "Holy Father," and he told us to pray, "Hallowed be thy Father-Name." The Pope is not the Holy Father. There is but one Holy Father, even God. We hallow his name by reserving that title for him alone.

The wise man said, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."[18] Some men would rather be rich than to be in good repute. They think their ill-gotten wealth will give them all the comforts they need, and that they can do without the good will of their fellow men; and they may live in luxury and they may find sycophants and flatterers who will fawn upon them for their favors, but they know that they deserve and they have the contempt of all honest people and they know that they must live and die in disgrace. There are wiser people who would rather have a good name than great riches. They would rather be known for their holiness than for hoarded gains. It is even so with our God. He would have all men to know and to appreciate and to acknowledge his holiness and to hallow his name by preserving and proving his holy character among their fellows.

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[17] Psa. 111. 9.

[18] Prov. 22. 1.

Twice only in the Old Testament does the phrase, "sanctify or hallow the name" of God occur. Isaiah had a vision of a glorious future in which it could be said of all of God's people, "They shall sanctify my Name; and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel."[19] Through Ezekiel God foretold the time when his people would all be true to him, and then he said, "I will sanctify my great Name, which was profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, . . . and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."[20]

Nature can glorify God; only men can hallow his name. The heavens declare the glory of God. They can bear their witness to God's might and magnificence. Only moral agents can declare his holiness. We stand by the seashore and look out over the boundless expanse of waters and remember that he holdeth them all in the hollow of his hand and we have some conception of God's majesty. We climb into the mountains, and there in the clear air we sweep the distant horizons and we feel the exaltation and the inspiration of that outlook, and we remember that he weigheth the mountains in his scales and putteth the whole round earth into his measure, and we have some conception of his power.

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[19] Isa. 29. 23.

[20] Ezek. 36. 23, 24, 27.

We look into the heavens on a clear night and refresh our spirits there in the starry depths, and we remember that he comprehendeth them all in a span, and we have some conception of his infinity. We turn from the great to the little, and we find every flower with its fair hue and every leaf with its green or gold mantle, every drop of rain with its crystal purity and every flake of snow with its fairylike structure glorifying God by the beauty and the perfection of its being and form. It was that saint Thomas Halyburton who once said: "Sometimes the God-man would let me see glimpses of his glory even in his works of creation and conservation. Sometimes the heavens declared the glory of their Creator to me, and the firmament showed itself to me as his handiwork. Till I could look with real satisfaction of mind and heart upon both the heavens and the earth, and could plainly see the print of his hands upon them all."

Jonathan Edwards was a poet as well as a great philosopher and a great preacher. His poetic feeling is nowhere more apparent than in that paragraph in which he describes his personal experience: "Immediately after my conversion God's excellency began to appear to me in everything: in the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in the waters, and in all nature. The Son of God created this world for this very end, to communicate to us through it a certain image of his own excellency, so that when we are delighted with flowery meadows and gentle breezes, we may see in all that only the sweet benevolence of Jesus Christ. When we behold the fragrant rose and the snow-white lily, we are to see his love and his purity. Even so the green trees, and the song of birds, what are they but the emanation of his infinite joy and benignity? The crystal rivers, and the murmuring streams, what are they but the footsteps of his favor and grace and beauty? When we behold the brightness of the sun, and the golden edges of the evening cloud, and the beauteous rainbow spanning the whole heaven, we but behold some adumbration of his goodness and his glory. And without any doubt this is the reason that Christ is called the Sun of Righteousness, the Morning Star, the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley, the Apple Tree among the trees of the wood, a bundle of myrrh, a doe, and a young hart." Thomas Halyburton and Jonathan Edwards saw God in nature and glorified him for his works. As far as we can see, inanimate nature does always that which pleases its Maker and thus glorifies him. When we turn to man we find that this is not always true of him. When he is lying and lascivious, deceiving and drunken, he is not an honor to God or a credit to himself. He neither glorifies God nor hallows his name. A man hallows the name of God only when he is holy himself.

III. *Profaning the Name.* How can a man hallow God's name? Many are ready to answer at once, "By not taking the name of the Lord our God in vain, according to the Mosaic commandment." There is a connection between this petition and the third Commandment. They both have to do with God's name. The commandment was negative, and forbade the taking of the name in vain. The prayer is positive and bids that the name be hallowed. Speaking broadly, that is the distinction between the Old and the New dispensation. The one said, "Thou shalt not," and the other says, "Thou shalt."

If we ask again, "What is it to take the name of the Lord in vain?" the ready answer again is, "It is blaspheming and cursing and swearing. It is making the air blue with awful oaths. It is calling upon God to curse and to damn and to annihilate forever, either in anger and earnest or in thoughtlessness and jest. It is the incessantly meaningless and blasphemous use of the name of the holy God for these unholy purposes." That is true. Assuredly, that is one way of taking the name of God in vain. However, this is a prayer given to the disciples, and the disciples of Jesus do not need to pray to be kept from blaspheming.

A Christian never swears and curses and raves around as some foul-mouthed blackguards do on our streets. Some of these seem utterly unable to complete a sentence without introducing the name of God, and it is an unutterable degradation to that holy name to be found in such company as their sentences keep. When we hear a man talking like that we know that he belongs to the depraved and the vicious classes. Profanity is such a vulgar and wicked habit that it never occurs to us to ask whether the constantly profane swearer is a Christian. We take it for granted that he is not. There is no sense in swearing. There is no good breeding in it. The habitual swearer always is a man of low instincts. If anyone who claims to be a gentleman is found freely interlarding his speech with oaths, some excuse must be found for him or he forfeits his claim.

"Simeon, the son of Eliezer, said: When the Israelites do the will of God, then his name is glorified in the world; but when the Israelites do not his will, then also his name is profaned in the world." It is one of the sayings of one of the Jewish fathers,[21] and it is in line with the teachings of the Old Testament prophets. They taught the people that the name of the Holy One of Israel would be dishonored by their idolatry,[22] and their perjury[23] and their lack of faith during the Egyptian bondage,[24] and in the Babylonian captivity.[25] Anything which led the heathen round about them to deny God's attributes or to doubt God's power was a profanation to his name. Anything which led the nations round about them to recognize a divine and holy spirit in their lives and in their history was a hallowing of God's name. This applies to Christians as well.

IV. *Hallowing the Name.* They hallow God's name, first of all, by cherishing worthy conceptions of God, his greatness and his holiness. They must not belittle him or dishonor him by their own meanness of thought concerning him. Jesus said that his name was Father. John translated that name as Love. God is our Father; God is Love. The orphaned world has been crying out for this revelation. The sinning and suffering world has longed to believe in a God of love. Yet even Christians have misunderstood and misrepresented the revelation. The Church too often has taught that God was arbitrary, autocratic, harsh and cruel and unjust. It preached a God who was vindictive and full of wrath against sinners. It proclaimed a stern and hard and pitiless theology. It talked about the damnation of innocent infants and the everlasting torment of sinful men and dishonored the Father name and slandered the Father character.

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[21] Mechilta, f. 27. 2.

[22] Lev. 18. 21.

[23] Lev. 19. 12.

[24] Ezek. 20. 7–9.

[25] Isa. 48. 11.

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We cannot lie about God and hallow his name at the same time. In the great epic Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar tried to get Job to confess the wickedness he did not feel in order that he might justify the ways of God with man and so be forgiven and relieved from suffering. Job steadfastly refused to use words of wind to please the Almighty or to say that he was a sinner when he was not. He held fast to his own honesty and integrity and so held fast to a worthy conception of the

High and Holy God whom he served. In the end Jehovah said: "Ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. My servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly."[26] Men have said many foolish things about God, sometimes in the effort to safeguard his reputation; but anything which is untrue is no honor to him. His name is hallowed by honesty. All worthy conceptions of God will be consistent with his Fatherhood; and that name will be hallowed best by those who believe most thoroughly in his love. Christians will not pray to God's "glorious and fearful name,"[27] nor ask men to hallow his "great and terrible name."[28] They will pray to the heavenly Father that "thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving health among all nations,"[29] and so they may come to love and praise his name.

First, worthy conceptions of God, a proper theology, faith in God's existence and attributes, a creed summed up in the one word "Father"; then, second, hope, confidence, trust in the power and the love revealed in that Father name. The psalmist said, "Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us."[30] In thy name will we claim the victory. Constantine put upon his banner, *"In hoc vinces."* We put upon our banner, "In this name we shall conquer." All power belongeth unto him; therefore, his kingdom shall come and his will shall be done. He is our Father, and therefore he will give us bread. He is our Father, and therefore he will forgive. His is the kingdom and the glory, and therefore he can deliver us from evil. In the name of our Father we go forth to our spiritual conflict, confident that in his love and his power we can triumph over all our foes. We can be world-conquerors, flesh-subduers, devil-drivers. All our enemies will flee before that mighty Name. All our faith is in him. All our hope is in him. In our faith and our hope we are sure to win, therefore we give to him our hearty allegiance and our love.

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[26] Job 42. 8.
[27] Deut. 28. 58.
[28] Psa. 99. 3.
[29] Psa. 67. 2.

We hallow his name, first, by worthy conceptions of him in our faith; and, second, by setting all our confidence and trust and hope upon his name; and, third, by giving him the love and loyalty of our lives, by showing ourselves worthy children of the Holy Father in heaven. Archbishop Leighton summed up the final truth of the matter when he said: "This is the most effectual sanctifying of his name by way of declaring it holy, when his people walk in holiness. Though you tell the world that he is holy, they know him not; they can neither see him nor his holiness; but when they see that there are men, taken out of the same lump of polluted nature with themselves, and yet, so renewed and changed, that they hate the defilements of the world, and do indeed live holily in the midst of a perverse generation; this may convince them that there is a brighter spring of holiness, where it is in fullness, from whence these drops are that they perceive in men: for seeing that it is not in nature, there must be another principle of it, and that can be no other than the holy God. Thus is his name hallowed, and he known to be holy, by the holiness of his people."

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[30] Psa. 44. 5.

John Fletcher of Madeley put the whole duty of the Christian into one sentence, "Beloved, let us get holy lives, and leave the rest to God." Our God is a holy God, and he says to us, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."[31] The child is expected to be like his father in character as well as in features. Jesus called our Father the "Holy Father,"[32] and we are expected to be holy like him. The best way in which we can hallow God's holy name is to keep our own lives clean and pure enough to reflect his own holy character. The clearer and calmer the stream, the more perfectly it reflects the image of the sun. The cleaner and purer our lives, the more fully they can reflect the character of the Father in heaven.

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[31] Lev. 11. 44, 45; 19. 2; 20. 7. 1 Pet. 1. 16.

[32] John 17. 11.

We belong to a royal family. We have had a Divine birth. We ought to walk worthy of our exalted relationship. When we resemble the Father, we hallow his name. When we accept salvation, we hallow the name of Jesus, the Saviour and Son. When we live in the enjoyment and the power of the divine indwelling, walking not after the flesh but after the spirit, we hallow the Holy Spirit's name. We do nothing which will bring disgrace upon the holy name by which we are called. We avoid everything which would spot or blemish the purity of our souls. Nothing will do that but conscious and voluntary sin. Christians therefore will live in the fear of God and in the love of the Father and in the power of the Spirit free from any known transgression of the law. They will hallow God's name by the spotless purity of their daily walk and conversation.

The model prayer begins, therefore, just as the great sermon began. First in the sermon we had the beatitudes setting forth the characteristics of the Christian life, and followed by the exhortation, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."[33] The life and the witness of the life came first. So here in the prayer the first petition is, "Hallowed be thy name," and the hallowing of the name demands the witness of a holy life. Christlieb used to say, "The Christian is the world's Bible," and if we say nothing by which God's name may be profaned and we do nothing by which it may be blasphemed, the world is sure to honor Him in whom we live and move and have our being.

There is a cursive manuscript of the Gospels, 700, which in the Gospel according to Luke opens this prayer with these words: "Father, hallowed be thy name, may the Holy Spirit come upon us and cleanse us." Gregory of Nyssa, in his treatise *De Oratione Dominica,*[34] quotes these petitions from Luke in the same manner. His text evidently contained a prayer for the coming and cleansing of the Holy Spirit, directly following and explaining the prayer for the hallowing of God's name. In the first half of the seventh century Maximus,[35] in his controversy with the Monothelites, quotes this petition for the Holy Spirit as given by Luke. Tertullian[36] and Marcion also seem to be acquainted with this petition, and their text seems to substitute the prayer for the coming and cleansing of the Holy Spirit for the petition, "Hallowed be thy name."

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[33] Matt. 5. 16.

[34] Gregory, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

The Kingdom comes with the coming of the Spirit. God's name is hallowed only by those whom the Spirit has cleansed. A holy people hallows the Father's name. Some of the early saints must have realized these facts so clearly that they substituted the prayer for the coming and cleansing of the Spirit either for the petition, "Hallowed be thy name," or for the petition, "Thy kingdom come." Both petitions seemed to them to be answered in the gift of the Spirit of holiness to God's people.

Only the pure in heart see God, and when we pray, "Hallowed be thy name," we pray for inward holiness in order that the holiness of God may be perceived and realized by us and then reflected to other men. That was the power of the primitive church. Clement of Rome, the earliest of the Christian writers after the close of the New Testament canon, said to the Corinthians, "Seeing, then, that we are the special portion of a holy God, let us practice the things that belong to holiness, forsaking evil speakings, impure and unholy embraces, revelings, tumults and hateful lusts, abominable adultery, and hateful pride."[37] The first Christians tried to realize that ideal. They hallowed the name of God in their faith and their worship, their character and their activities. We read that it was a common answer of the ancient martyrs, "I am a Christian, and with us no evil is done." Their worst enemies could not deny that fact, and therefore the church triumphed over their prejudices and their persecutions, and even those who did not know the Lord came to fear his name.

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[35] Migne, P. G., 90, p. 884f.

[36] Adv. Marc. iv. 26.

V. *Conclusions.* This prayer, therefore, becomes a missionary prayer. Nothing honors God more than a holy life, and when we pray that his name may be hallowed in our holy lives, we pray that in that way all the nations may be brought to fear the name of the Lord until from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name will be praised. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteousnesses are made manifest."[38] "In that day shall there be one Lord and his name one,"[39] for the Lord's prayer shall be answered in the unity of his people and the triumph of his cause, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."[40]

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[37] Clem. Rom. ad Cor. xxx.

This is a prayer for holiness. We cannot pray it to any purpose if we are dishallowing and dishonoring God's name by continuing willfully in sin. We cannot pray it honestly if we are maintaining slanderous tongues and unclean lips and impure lives. It is a mere mockery to pray this prayer unless we are sincerely endeavoring by the aid of God's grace to live worthy and holy lives. To pray the prayer under any other conditions is to profane God's name and not to hallow it. When we pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," we mean by that petition, "In all our conduct, in private and in public, from sunrise to sunset as well as in the quiet watches of the night, whatsoever we do, whether we eat or we drink, may we do all to the glory of God." Are all who say the prayer really praying it? Not if they are living anywhere below their privileges in the Christian life; not if there is any lack of faith in their hearts in God's Fatherhood and all-sufficiency of salvation; not if they are cherishing any uncleanness for which their conscience reproves them and which they know is unworthy of a disciple of Jesus, representing the Holy Father and the Crystal Christ to the world.

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[38] Rev. 15. 4.
[39] Zech. 14. 9.
[40] John 17. 11.

We begin to see now how much is included in this petition. We pray, first, that all profanation of the Name of God among men may be brought to an end; and, second, that all the people of God may be holy like him; and, third, that all things relating to God may be held in due reverence and regard; and, fourth, that all atheism may cease, and all paganism be banished from the earth, and all superstition die a natural death, and all idolatry and all infidelity and all impiety may be removed until the word of the Lord may run and be glorified in the very ends of the earth and among the remotest tribes of men, and all shall know God and glorify him in his works and be sanctified in his truth, and so hallow his name in every word and every deed. We cannot enter upon the discussion of all these possibilities opened before us by the repetition of these words. We leave them with a feeling of their inexhaustible significance and turn now to the study of the second petition in the model prayer, "Thy kingdom come" on earth as it is in heaven.

PART FOUR

THE SECOND PETITION

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PART FOUR

THE SECOND PETITION

Luther suggested the connection of this petition with the preceding one, as follows: When the children say, "Hallowed be thy name," the Father asks, "How can my honor and name be sanctified among you, seeing that all your heart and thoughts are inclined to evil, and you are in the captivity of sin, and none can sing my song in a strange land?" So the children pray again: "O Father, it is true. Help us out of our misery; let thy kingdom come, that sin may be driven away, and we be made according to thy pleasure, that thou alone mayest reign in us, and we be thy dominion, obeying thee with all our powers of body and soul."[1] The one prayer thus leads naturally to the other.

Zechariah had united the thought of the king with the thought of the name in his prophecy, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one,"[2] and in the synagogue prayer called the Kaddisch the Jews have joined the two together to this day: "May his great name be magnified and sanctified in the world which he has created according to his will. May he cause his sovereignty to reign and his redemption to shoot forth, and may he bring near his Messiah and redeem his people in your life and in your days, and in the life of the House of Israel speedily and at a near time. And say ye, Amen."

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[1] Saphir, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

[2] Zech. 14. 9.

Thy kingdom come! It is the shortest of the seven petitions of the model prayer, but it has a depth of meaning equal to any of the others. It has been called "the sun and center" of the three petitions forming the first section of the prayer, and Saphir declares that it is the most comprehensive of them all. "It is a summary of the whole Scripture revelation from Genesis to the Apocalypse: it reveals the purpose, the hidden meaning, and the final consummation of all history."[3]

I. *The Kingdom.* It introduces us to the conception of the kingdom of God, the dominant conception of the New Testament and the central thought in the teachings of Jesus. Alexander Balmain Bruce, in his volume entitled *The Kingdom of God,* says in the Introduction: "The doctrine of Christ, as contained in the Gospels, is the doctrine of the kingdom of God. Under this category all may be ranged; there is no other entitled to be placed above it, or that does not easily find a place under it. The ethical teaching of Christ is very important, and Baur and others have given it the first place, and made the doctrine of the Kingdom subordinate and secondary. But the ethics of Jesus are the ethics of the Kingdom, setting forth the laws by which its subjects are to guide their lives. The function of Christ as a Redeemer is a still more important category, and it might seem as if the most appropriate general description of his teaching would be one giving prominence, as he did himself, to the fact that he came to save the lost—the doctrine of salvation. But even this heading falls naturally under the doctrine of the Kingdom. The doctrine of salvation shows the way by which men enter into the Kingdom.

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[3] Saphir, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

"Christianity has been described as being, not a circle with one center, but an ellipse with two foci; the doctrine of the Kingdom being one of the foci, the doctrine of redemption the other. But no indignity is done to Christ's redeeming work by including it as a particular under the general head of the Kingdom; rather is its fundamental importance thereby signalized. No higher idea can be formed of salvation than to make it consist of citizenship in the divine commonwealth; nor can Christ's importance as Saviour be more conspicuously magnified than by representing him as one to whom citizens owe their admission to the privilege. I have no hesitation, therefore, in regarding the kingdom of God as an exhaustive category."

It goes without saying that Jesus had the highest interest in the planting, the progress, and the final success of the kingdom of God; and it is equally clear that if we are the disciples of Jesus we cannot be indifferent to that which was of the highest interest to our Lord. Now, all that Jesus said while he was upon the earth can be shown to revolve about the one central point, that he represented to men the primary importance of the kingdom of God. All of the synoptic Gospels tell us that Jesus began his ministry in Galilee by teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.[4] His first message, like that of John the Baptist, was this: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel."[5]

This is the most constantly recurring phrase through all of his teaching, as his parables so well illustrate. "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed; the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven; the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net which was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind."[6] When Jesus sent out the twelve he commanded them to "preach the kingdom of God."[7] The seventy were sent later and the message he gave to them was, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."[8]

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[4] Matt. 4. 23; 9. 35. Mark 1. 14, 15. Luke 4. 43

[5] Matt. 3. 2; 4. 17.

Toward the end of his ministry he prophesied, "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations: and then shall the end come."[9] At the Last Supper he was still speaking to his chosen ones of "the kingdom of God."[10] After the resurrection, in the forty days before the ascension, he appeared again and again to those who believed upon him and the one theme of his discourse with them was that one theme of the whole of his ministry. He spake of "the things concerning the kingdom of God."[11] This, then, is the central truth in the teaching of Jesus. He came to found a kingdom upon the earth, a kingdom in this world though not of the world, as he told Pilate just before he went to the cross.[12]

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[6] Matt. 13. 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47.
[7] Matt. 10. 7. Luke 9. 2.
[8] Luke 10. 9.
[9] Matt. 24. 14.
[10] Luke 22. 18, 30.

The Sermon on the Mount sets forth the constitution of this kingdom. The realization of it in history is the peculiar mission of the Christian Church. The first apostles set about that work. Philip went down into Samaria, "preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God."[13] Paul spent three months in Ephesus, "disputing and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God."[14] The history of the apostolic church in the New Testament closes with the statement that the great apostle had come to Rome, the capital of the empire, and that there "he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one hindering him."[15] The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God, two phrases descriptive of one thing, were the central and continuous theme of the teaching and preaching of Jesus and the apostles here upon the earth. The phrase "the kingdom of God" occurs one hundred and forty times in the Gospels and the Epistles.

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[11] Acts 1. 3.

[12] John 18. 36.

[13] Acts 8. 12.

[14] Acts 19. 8.

[15] Acts 28. 30, 31.

What is this kingdom which Jesus taught and the apostles preached and for the coming of which we pray? It is not the kingdom of God's providence, for that has been from of old. The control of God over all of his creatures is not coming or to come; it already is here. David recognized it in his prayer, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. . . . Thou reignest over all; and in thy hand is power and might."[16] This kingdom of providence and power is now inaugurated and it will continue forever. We need not pray for it to come.

It is not the kingdom of glory, for that too already is established, and it is not to come to us but we are to go to it in due season. "Then shall the King say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."[17] That kingdom already is inaugurated and will wait for the coming of those who have been prepared in the kingdom on earth to share in its glories. What is the kingdom of preparation? It is the kingdom of God's grace, for which we pray that it may come upon earth even as it is now in heaven. It is "the reign of Divine love exercised by God in his grace over human hearts believing in his love, and constrained thereby to yield him grateful affection and devoted service."[18] Therefore, when the disciples of Jesus pray, as he has commanded them, "Thy kingdom come," they gratefully and affectionately acknowledge God as their King, to whom they are voluntarily and cheerfully subject and to whose service they are loyally and lovingly devoted; and they pray that others and that all may be constrained by their love to God and by God's love to them to come into the Kingdom by his grace and to enjoy with them all of its privileges and blessings. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of grace exercised in the reign of God's love over human hearts, and only as human hearts are opened to receive the King does the Kingdom come upon the earth. Therefore, the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is a prayer for the triumph of God's grace over the hearts of men.

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[16] 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12.

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[17] Matt. 25. 34.

[18] Bruce, *The Kingdom of God*, p. 46.

It is not a prayer for the Second Advent, as Theophylact thought. It is not a prayer for future glory, as Chrysostom and Augustine thought. It includes the victorious development of the Christian Church, as Tholuck and De Wette taught; but it is somewhat greater than that, for the spiritual kingdom never will be exactly coincident with and always is likely to be larger than the organized and visible kingdom on earth. Alford said it was the gospel dispensation, but that is not a definition. The Kingdom will come in the gospel dispensation but it will be something different from the dispensation itself. Meyer said that the kingdom of God was the Messianic kingdom, but this again fails to define the nature of either of these terms, Messiah or Kingdom.

II. *Spiritual.* We come back to our own definition: the kingdom of God, as Jerome and Stier and Bruce have suggested, is the reign of God's grace in human souls. It comes by spiritual methods alone. It comes through the Holy Spirit alone. It comes to the spirit of man alone. It is a spiritual kingdom. As Paul says, "The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."[19] It is righteousness, to begin with. We pray for the time to come when righteousness shall be supreme on this earth, when all men shall be just and honest and pure and true, when there shall be no more hideous oppressions or cruel wrongs, when tyrannies shall cease and fraternities shall be enthroned.

Then it is peace. We pray for the time to come when strifes shall be ended and wars shall be no more, when all enmities shall have died away and all hates shall be buried, when mutual distrusts shall have given way to mutual respect and love, when there shall be peace between brethren and peace among all the people, when swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks, when all battlefields shall be turned into grain fields, and there shall be helpful harvests instead of human holocausts and orchards and vineyards instead of trenches and ambuscades. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of righteousness in which righteousness will be maintained not by armies and the weapons of war but in peace. As long as we need an international armament to preserve the peace of the nations we may believe that we are on the way to the kingdom of God upon the earth but we will know that that kingdom has not yet arrived.

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[19] Rom. 14. 17.

37 It is a kingdom of joy. There is sorrow wherever there is injustice. There are tears wherever there are wars. Righteousness and peace guarantee abiding joy. The kingdom of God is the kingdom of heaven, but the New Testament kingdom of heaven is not in heaven now and is not to be in heaven at some future day. This kingdom for which Jesus told us to pray is to come here upon the earth, here in our homes and in our cities and among our nations and around the world. Its two outstanding characteristics are spirituality and universality. Spirituality characterizes every member of the Kingdom now. Universality is its aim now and will be its realized goal in the end. Both the process and the consummation are to be on this earth.

The Kingdom is the kingdom of heaven because of its heavenly character and origin. We pray that the atmosphere of heaven may become the atmosphere of earth, that the Sovereign of heaven may become the Sovereign of earth as well, and that the established laws of heaven may become the established laws of life and procedure here upon the earth as well. The kingdom of heaven, "Thy kingdom" for which we pray, is a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy among good men and good women everywhere. It means the banishment from the earth of all unrighteousness and strife and sorrow caused by sin and the universal reign of justice, goodness, love.

Tertullian thought that this petition ought to be the third rather than the second in order, for he thought that it was only after the will of God was done upon the earth even as it was done in heaven that the Kingdom could come, and he identified the coming of the Kingdom with the coming of the King in the Second Advent in the end of the world, but we are not praying for the world to come to an end when we pray, "Thy kingdom come." We are praying that this earth may become heavenly, that all men may acknowledge God as King here and now; and if not now, eventually. We pray for a "new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,"[20] which will be this old earth regenerated and transformed by the grace of God until all men in it are subjects of heaven's King. When all men in all sincerity call upon God as Father and trust in Jesus as Redeemer and experience all the consolations and inspirations of the indwelling Spirit of God the heavenly kingdom will be established upon the earth.

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[20] 2 Pet. 3. 13.

Jesus was the perfect example in his perfect humanity of perfect submission to the leading of the Spirit and the direction of the Father in all things. The Son could do nothing of himself but what he saw the Father doing. He did always those things which pleased the Father. He was the embodiment of the Kingdom in an earthly life. He represented and realized the Kingdom among men. When all men walk even as he walked, so that their whole life glorifies the Father who is in heaven, God will be all and in all here upon the earth even as he is in heaven; and then, and only then, this prayer will be completely answered.

There are those now who are ruled by the world and by the maxims of the world. They believe in worldly wisdom and worldly prudence and worldly methods and aims. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. Those who are ruled by the world are not ruled by God. They go with the multitude even when the multitude goes to do evil. They swim with the current. They float with the tide. They never break with custom. They never oppose the majority. The dominant feeling in their day is their monarch and to it they now bow in unhesitating submission. The kingdom in which they live is the kingdom of the present fashion, whether it be of clothes or of creed. With them the only right thing is the fashionable thing, and they do not pray, "Thy kingdom come," because the present kingdom is all-sufficient for their needs.

There are those who are ruled by the flesh and the lusts of the flesh and they live in a state of perfect anarchy. Reason is overthrown and the passions are unbridled and the ears are closed to all warning and the eyes are shut to all consequences and all movement is downward toward the bottomless pit. They are not praying, "Thy kingdom come." They are not praying at all.

There are those who are ruled by the devil, who may be the prince of the world, the spirit of the age, or who may be some demonic and dominant pride or passion. He is a tyrant always and his subjects are slaves. They are captives to his will, fettered in all their faculties. They know nothing of the freedom or of the beatitude of the children of God.

There are those who are ruled by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh. They are subject to Christ and not to custom. They are governed by love and not by lust. They pray, "*Thy* kingdom come," and the kingdom they pray for is the kingdom of the Father of grace and love. They pray that this kingdom may be enthroned in their own lives and then in the lives of all other men.

Only those can pray the prayer in faith who believe in the possibility of its realization. Jesus believed that all men might be saved. He despaired of no man. He lived in a far from ideal state of society. There were slaveries and cruelties and oppressions on every hand. The empire had been founded by force and built upon blood. Ceremonialism and exclusiveness, hypocrisy and hatred had come to characterize the religion of his people. Yet it was in this world that Jesus preached his idealism.

It was to the Pharisees, and not to the disciples, that he said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you."[21] It was among them, for he himself was there as its representative and there were a few disciples of the new faith; but Jesus said that it was not only among them but within them, and that was one of the most characteristic and one of the most beautiful things he ever said. They were hypocrites and blind, they were serpents and offspring of vipers, and yet the kingdom of God was a blessed possibility within them.

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[21] Luke 17. 21.

The Kingdom was all that was good and they were all that was bad; and yet, and yet, they were not hopeless. Any one of them could come into the Kingdom. Every one of them had within him the latent germ of his own complete regeneration.

That was the gospel of Jesus to those who crucified him. "You may be bad, but you can be good. You may hate me now, but you may at any moment come to love me. You may be an enemy now, but you may in any day be a loyal disciple. You may be selfish, deceitful, blasphemous, adulterous, and drunken, but you have within you the possibility of being unselfish, truthful, reverent, chaste, and sober. The actualities of evil within you are only the proofs of the possibilities of the opposite good. The scoundrel of to-day may be the saint of to-morrow. We have seen the transformation so many times that we are surprised by it no longer. The miracle has become a commonplace. We have seen the greatest capacities of evil turned into the most glorious achievements of holiness. The lascivious has become the chaste. The covetous has become the generous. The coward has become courageous. The craven has become the conqueror. I say to you all that the kingdom of God is within you, not because you are good men, and surely not because you are bad men, but because you are men, made in the image of God, with the freedom of the human will, and therefore capable of both evil and good. You have within you qualities which, quickened by the Spirit, will make you the acceptable children of God, the worthy subjects of the heavenly King. The kingdom of heaven is within you; only believe it and become subject to it and you may be heroes, martyrs, saints. There is no height of spiritual attainment which is not open to you. No matter what you are now, you may be children of the Father in heaven, hallowing his name, subjects in his kingdom, doing his blessed will on earth even as it is done in the highest heaven."

Sidney Carton had fallen to the lowest depths. He had no more courage or hope for himself, and his friends had given him up as hopelessly lost. Then a good woman refused to believe that he was as bad as everybody said that he was, and Sidney Carton was reclaimed by her faith in him to the point of a final self-sacrifice which won him the respect and the admiration of all. It is the gospel of Jesus that God believes in us, that he does not despair of us, that he hopes and hopes that the kingdom of heaven which he has implanted within us shall become no longer latent but potent, no longer subliminal but imperial, no longer suppressed but supreme.

III. *How It Comes.* There is only one way in which a kingdom like this can come on the earth—not by persecution or compulsion, not by force of arms, not by unions of church and state, not by established hierarchies, not by unhallowed alliances, not by worldly methods, not by temporal or temporizing expedients, but only by the free-will surrender of individual souls to the sovereignty of the heavenly King. The Kingdom comes when any man becomes a Christian. The Kingdom comes as more and more men are won to allegiance to the King. The Kingdom comes when those who are in the Kingdom grow in knowledge and in grace. The Kingdom comes by missionary effort and by personal evangelism. In this slow and sure method it aims at the conquest of the world. It is the greatest task ever set before the race, the subjugation of all the races to the heavenly King.

This prayer will not be answered in its fullness as long as the gospel has not been carried to every portion of the earth and as long as there is a single soul anywhere which has not accepted its glad message of salvation. Therefore this petition has been called the petition of hope, for while all the other petitions may have present answers, the full realization of the answer to this petition is postponed to some future date, some far future it would seem to us now, though by our prayers and our labors we hope to hasten its coming. It may be fulfilled in ourselves even now. It will be fulfilled in all others as soon as our lives and our efforts and our prayers may bring about this blessed consummation.

Augustine said, *"Nondum regnat hoc regnum"*—"This royalty is not yet regal everywhere." This kingdom does not yet prevail in all the earth. That is just as patently true in our day as it was in his. As long as the Sins of Society are rampant here at home—drunkenness and licentiousness and gambling and extravagance; as long as there is corruption in municipal and legislative life; as long as there are tyrannies and oppressions in jungles of packinghouse districts and unsanitary tenements and unsafe factories and mines; as long as there are starvation wages; as long as there is heartless competition of soulless corporations; as long as selfishness rules in business and national affairs; as long as cruelties and persecutions and slaveries last in the dark places of the earth; as long as professedly Christian nations refuse to be governed by any but pagan principles; as long as men are being trained by the millions for mutual slaughter; as long as the wealth of the world which ought to be used for the good of the world is being spent in the production of vast armaments and the support of vast armies; as long as ministers of the gospel of Christ, forgetful of the only sovereign efficacy of the sacrifice on Calvary, glorify war as the great cleanser of the conscience and regenerator of the race; as long as the church itself is given over to the worship of mammon and social position and worldly power; as long as it is disgraced with sectarian bitterness and rival divisions and persecuting expedients; as long as it endures any alliance with iniquity as in the licensing or the production of liquor or harmful drugs; as long as it puts its chief reliance upon the arm of flesh rather than upon the Spirit of God, we know that the kingdom of God is not yet realized here on the earth.

The Kingdom sets itself over against all these things. We pray, "Thy kingdom come," in confident faith that in due time all these things shall disappear, and then we labor to the end that they may end. Is any one discouraged that so many centuries have gone by and the Kingdom is so far from realization yet? It is true that progress has been slow, but the apostate church is principally responsible for that fact. When the church goes back to its primitive purity and begins in all sincerity to preach and to practice the gospel of Jesus and Paul and John, it will cease to be an impotent thing which is despised and ridiculed on every hand, and it will become again a glorious power in the earth and its victories will be multiplied in geometrical ratio, and at the last nations will be born in a day.

The Kingdom came when Jesus began preaching that it was even then at hand and a few heard and believed. The Kingdom came in greater power at Pentecost when the little band of believers were baptized in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and three thousand were converted in a day. Judgment came in the destruction of Jerusalem and then the Kingdom came in the scattering of the Christians through the many lands about the Mediterranean Sea. The Kingdom came in the days of the great persecutions when the blood of the martyrs won thousands and thousands to the new faith and the church rose to the moral mastery of the empire.

The Kingdom came in the great Reformation of the fifteenth century and in the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century which partially recalled the church to the purity of faith and conduct set forth in the New Testament. The Kingdom came in the great missionary awakening of the nineteenth century which has resulted in many of the missionary fields in an approach to the experiences and the triumphs of the apostolic days. Judgment has come again upon the civilized world in the results of a war which dwarfed all the other conflicts of history in its magnitude and its atrocities and its follies in the expenditure of money and men, a war which marked the collapse of all our hopes based upon our vaunted enlightenment and culture and the progress and prosperity on which we had prided ourselves so much, and which ought to bring the whole world to see that there is no sure hope for it except in a return to the precepts of the Prince of Peace, militarism having proved such a dismal failure.

May we not hope now that the Kingdom will come more rapidly in the days before us than in any days since the age of Constantine? It surely will if the Christian Church will repudiate its reliance upon force and violence and the murdering of men and henceforth in repentance for the past and in faith for the future depend only upon the Spirit of God. Then it can pray,

"Father, let thy kingdom come,
Let it come with living power;
Speak at length the final word,
Usher in the triumph hour.

"As it came in days of old,
In the deepest hearts of men,
When thy martyrs died for thee,
Let it come, O God, again.

"Empires, temples, scepters, thrones—
May they all for God be won!
And, in every human heart,
Father, let thy kingdom come."[22]

If any prayer is heard in heaven, it must be the sincere desire of the heart; and the sincere desire of the heart will be evidenced, not so much by any petition which the lips may utter as by our daily walk and conversation. There are people who pray this prayer, "Thy kingdom come," every day of their life, and yet thus far in life they never have lifted a finger to bring the Kingdom into any heart or into any place. From such people this prayer in the ear of God is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, a hollow mockery from a hypocrite's heart. John Ruskin said: "If you do not wish for his kingdom, don't pray for it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it; you must work for it."[23] These first petitions of the Lord's Prayer are not simply requests that certain things may happen to us; they are promises that with God's help we ourselves will do certain things. There was an old Latin proverb, *"Laborare est orare"*—"To labor is to pray." At any rate, work and worship must go together. When there is the possibility of any effort on our part to bring about the answer to our own petition, prayer and performance must be combined.

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[22] John Page Hopps.

[23] Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive.*

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion," Amos said.[24] "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently," Jeremiah may have said.[25] It is the marginal reading of the Authorized Version, and it states a prophetic truth. Can a disciple be at ease when the fields are white unto harvest? Can a prophet be lazy or negligent when the fire is burning in his bones?

The setting up of the Kingdom is a cooperative movement. We are all partners in this enterprise, and every partner is expected to put all his enterprise as well as all his petition into this project. It is our concern just as surely as it is the concern of the Father in heaven. We are promoters of the Kingdom and of all the interests of the

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[24] Amos 6. 1.

[25] Jer. 48. 10.

Kingdom, no matter what our profession or trade or position in society may be. It is our business to live and to labor that the kingdom of God may come as soon as may be possible to all the earth. Faith and works, prayer and performance must go together. The one without the other is dead. To pray, "Thy kingdom come," without working for the coming of the Kingdom is of just as little account as to work for its coming without praying for God's blessing upon the work.

"Lord, when we pray, 'Thy kingdom come,'
Then fold our hands without a care
For souls whom thou hast died to save,
We do but mock thee with our prayer.

"Thou couldst have sent an angel band
To call thy straying children home;
And thus through heavenly ministries,
On earth thy kingdom might have come.

"But since to human hands like ours
Thou hast committed work divine,
Shall not our eager hearts make haste
To join their feeble powers with thine?

"To work and work shall not our hands
Obedient move, nor lips be dumb,
Lest, through our sinful love of ease,
Thy kingdom should delay to come?"[26]

IV. *What Is Involved.* This is a missionary petition. It sets forth the truth that our religion has a universal destination. When there were but twelve apostles and a mere handful of disciples besides, Jesus said to them, "Go ye therefore and disciple all the nations."[27] That command is upon every disciple still. It was the last command of the Master. It represented the greatest desire of his heart, that his gospel should be preached to every creature. Every true disciple of Jesus will feel this supreme interest too. He will not be satisfied until every Mohammedan and every Hindu and every Buddhist and every Shintoist and every pagan idolater and every Jew and every infidel has become a Christian. This is a prayer that all the nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues may know our Saviour and worship our God, and that all our brothers, North and South and East and West, may bow their knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

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[26] Helen G. Rice.

The kingdom of God is to know no national boundaries and no racial distinctions, no limits of any kind until the last man in the farthermost corner of the earth has been reached and evangelized and converted. Therefore, those who in the bottom of their hearts have little or no interest in the Christianization of the world have no right to pray this prayer. This prayer means that we desire the extension of God's kingdom upon the earth more than we desire our daily bread and that we are ready to postpone any prayer for our personal needs until we have prayed for the coming of this Kingdom. How can it be prayed with any sincerity by those who never have shown the slightest interest in the missionary cause, never have given any evidence of the slightest missionary zeal, and never have put forth the slightest personal effort to answer their prayer?

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[27] Matt. 28. 19.

Through all the Christian centuries the church has been repeating this petition, and yet from the third century to the last century the church as a whole never seemed to have any missionary vision and was characterized by lukewarmness and indifference to all missionary propaganda. There were a few noble exceptions, a few individuals here and there who engaged in missionary labors with something like the zeal and the success of apostolic days, but for the most part this prayer was pure hypocrisy in all the myriads of its repetitions by those who said it and yet felt no call to lift a finger to bring about its consummation. During the last century the general church has been aroused to the importance and the necessity of the missionary enterprise as never before since the days of Constantine, but only a beginning has been made in this direction so far.

Our contributions in money and men are pitifully small as compared with our ability and our responsibility at this point. The Great War proved that the church is willing to give ten times as much for the spread of democracy and the overthrow of oligarchy or the preservation of national integrity and the possibility of commercial supremacy—for all the mixed motives represented in the world debacle—than it ever has been willing to give for the spread of the kingdom of God and the overthrow of the kingdom of evil in the world. The boast of philanthropic associations that more money was given to them in the stress of the war appeals than the church ever had given to the support of its enterprises in any year of its history is a sad confession of the disgraceful fact that the church is not yet awake to its opportunities and its supreme mission in the world.

The fact that our Christian young men flocked by hundreds into the ranks of the opposing armies and into every form of activity which the war opened up in the way of helpful ministry, while the mission fields were clamoring for recruits and the home pulpits could not be supplied proves that the call to the greatest of all campaigns and the vision of the greatest of all victories in the winning of the world to our Christ never has reached them in any commanding or compelling fashion. They were caught by lower ambitions. They flocked to inferior standards. It was not their fault, but the fault of the church which had failed to make them realize that there is no cause so glorious as that of the Christ and no claim so imperious as that which the Kingdom makes upon us.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[28] The hallowing of the Father's name and the coming of the Kingdom—these are the supreme objects for our efforts and our prayers. All other things are of subordinate importance. They will be added in due season if we only will be ready to put first things first in both our faith and our life. We must go back to the great commission and to the missionary activity of the first disciples. If their zeal had been maintained in the church, the Kingdom might have come to the whole earth before this time, and instead of a world going mad and committing suicide on countless battlefields we would have had a world in which righteousness and peace and joy would have been universal and supreme and serene.

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[28] Mat . 6. 33.]

Soberly and solemnly every member of the church should face the question, "Does God call me into the foreign missionary field?" Every one who loves God and is a subject in his Kingdom ought to be subject to orders and be just as ready and willing to serve God among the Hottentots of South Africa or the pariahs of mid-India as anywhere at home. He must not shrink from any self-denial or self-sacrifice which any of our missionaries are called upon to endure. The call to active service is upon every disciple. He ought to quit praying this prayer until he has faced and answered his own responsibility in connection with it. If every member of the church seriously would wrestle with his own conscience before God in prayer over this matter, the number of our volunteers for foreign missionary work might be doubled in any year. At any rate it is clear that all who pray this prayer, "Thy kingdom come," ought first of all to decide whether in the answer to that prayer God does not have use for their gifts and graces in this greatest task intrusted to his children, the conversion of the world to Christ, and the extension of his Kingdom to all the races of men.

When that question is decided and the disciple is sure that his field of work is at home rather than abroad, that ought not to lessen his interest in the work in the foreign field. He still can contribute to the cause in perpetual intercession and proportionate giving. If he does not give what he ought to the enterprise, he cannot pray this prayer. He who smokes or chews and spends more money annually upon his tobacco, which is supposedly a mere luxury to him, than he annually contributes to the missionary cause shows that he thinks more of the consumption of his tobacco than he does of the coming of the Kingdom. He would rather have his tobacco than the triumph of the cause of Christ in the world. That is a single illustration. The same thing is true of all luxuries and of all expenditure of our means. The coming of the Kingdom was the supremely important thing with the Christ and it will be the supremely important thing with every disciple who is completely consecrated to him.

The world over the Church of God is praying, "Thy kingdom come," and the world over the Church of God is giving only a few cents annually for each heathen to bring the heathen world to Christ. That means that for every member of the church who prays this prayer with the necessary and appropriate consecration of time and talents and means, and whose prayer therefore is acceptable unto God, there are scores or hundreds or thousands whose repetition of these words is an abomination unto him because it simply reminds him of their miserliness and their insincerity and their hypocrisy.

It is hypocrisy to pray the prayer if we are not doing what we can to bring the Kingdom to other men. The first and most natural desire of every truly converted man is to see somebody else converted. The peace and joy which he has he would share with all the race. For the glory of God he would have all men acknowledge God as their King, and for the good of all men he would have them come into the Kingdom and share in its blessings. Foreign missionaries are not to be the only evangelists in the church. There is just as great need of evangelism here at home. The order has been from the very beginning, "Let every man teach his fellow citizen and let every man teach his brother, saying, Know the Lord."[29] The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; but the command from the very beginning has been,

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[29] Heb. 8. 11.

"Let him that heareth say, Come."[30] The Lord says to every man whom he calls into his service, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."[31] With that commission it is the duty of every disciple to cast the net in all waters and to bait the hook on every occasion and to draw the net or the line at every opportunity. When he has least reason to expect it he will find that he has caught a fish. Every disciple is sure to see the time when, if he speaks a word in season, he will rescue a soul from perdition. If he does not speak the word, he will face a lost opportunity and a lost soul before the judgment seat of God and he will hear the Judge say, "The blood of this man I will require at thy hands!" If every professing Christian would bring one other soul into the Kingdom each year, it would take less than a dozen years for every adult and responsible person on the globe to become subject to our King.

The Kingdom could come in twelve years' time if the church went to work at the task in real earnest and if every man brought one neighbor in each year. That would be a small thing to ask of a church which was spiritually alive and therefore continuously evangelistic. Every Christian is commissioned as an evangelist. Whenever the church becomes "Christianity in earnest" the work will be done. Now there are thousands of members of the church who pray, "Thy kingdom come," every morning in their family worship or at stated intervals in their public worship, and then go out into their daily associations among their acquaintances and friends, and when they see one of them going astray, blaspheming, drinking, indulging in any evil temper, appetite, or habit, simply shrug their shoulders and say to themselves, "It is too bad; but am I my brother's keeper?"

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[30] Rev. 22. 17.

[31] Mark 1. 17.

As parents, they do not labor daily, or occasionally even, to bring their children into the kingdom of God. They provide everything necessary for their temporal welfare; they clothe them, feed them, educate them, but they never spend an hour in earnest evangelism with them, endeavoring to persuade them to come into the kingdom of God. As friends, it never seems to occur to them that they ought to deal kindly but earnestly with their friends about the eternal welfare of their souls. As neighbors and acquaintances they let slip opportunity after opportunity to speak a word in praise of the King and in presentation of the claims and the blessings of his Kingdom.

Yet they pray, "Thy kingdom come," without any twinge of conscience, and the fact that they can do it proves that their conscience is dulled and dead and that there is not enough life left in it to twinge.

Conversion is more or less out of date in these days. In some places the more and more fashionable it becomes to join the church the less and less fashionable it becomes to get converted. That means that the church is worldly instead of spiritual, impotent instead of mighty, dead and buried instead of vital and victorious. That means that the church is more apostate than apostolical. We are told that only forty per cent of the people in America are even nominal Christians; and that forty per cent includes all the dead timber of the church membership. We are told that for every one hundred preachers and people in the Christian Church before the war there were only seven additions to the church membership in a year, and since four per cent of that increase represented the addition of children from the Sunday school, there really was an addition of only three per cent to represent the result of all aggressive effort of the church to win the outside world to Christ. One hundred preachers and people laboring a year to get three more into the church! when every one ought to win one at least in every twelve months! That record shows a moribund church, a sleeping church, a church going through the motions of life when it really is dead or next to dead. We may as well face the facts as they are and see just what they mean.

It is marvelous what depths of soul-searching each of these petitions in the model prayer suggests. The question which this petition brings closest home to each one is not that of the foreign-mission field or of home evangelism but of personal experience. Can any one pray, "Thy kingdom come," if the door of his own heart is closed against the coming of the King? Can he pray, "Thy kingdom come," if there is *any rebellion* in his heart against the King? Can he fervently and honestly pray, "Thy kingdom come," if he does not love the King with *all* his heart and mind and soul and strength?

Can he pray, "Thy kingdom come," with anything less than the experience of *perfect* love, anything less than *complete* consecration to the service of the King? Can he pray, "Thy kingdom come," and yet consciously restrict the King to a limited control, to anything less than an absolute monarchy in his soul? Can he pray, "Thy kingdom come," without a full and unqualified, an irrevocable and utter surrender to the King? Can he look up into the face of God and pray, "Thy kingdom come," without meaning in that prayer, "O King, here are my hands, sacred to thy service; my feet, sacred to thy service; my tongue, sacred to thy service; my time, sacred to thy service; myself, henceforth sacredly set apart to thy service"? Can any disciple of Jesus pray, "Thy kingdom come," and yet consciously set up any limit to the King's commands and the King's control? Can he pray, "Thy kingdom come," without pledging in that prayer his own implicit obedience to the King?

When David Livingstone came to his last birthday on earth he wrote in his diary, "My Jesus, my King, my Life, my All! I again dedicate my whole self to thee." He could pray, "Thy kingdom come," with perfect sincerity. It had come to him and he was doing all he could to establish it in Africa. He had given his whole self to the King. He was giving his whole life to the Kingdom. Anything short of entire consecration is unfit to pray this prayer. Every such shortage makes room for insincerity and hypocrisy. One must be ready to say with Paul, "If we live we live unto the Lord, and if we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's,"[32] and then he can pray each morning, "Thy kingdom come," and the King will make royal entry into his heart, and will take full possession of his life, and wherever he goes or whatever he does the Kingdom will prosper because he carries with him the presence and power of the King.

The trouble with most people when they pray this prayer, is that they are thinking about the Kingdom *going* rather than coming. They are thinking about the *extension* of the Kingdom to the ends of the earth. They are praying for the conversion of the heathen and the reclamation of the far-off dark places of the globe. As far as they are concerned, heaven is a place to which they expect to *go* some time or other, and they rather hope too that it will be a long time before they will have to go there. It never occurs to them that the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom that may *come* to *them* here and now. It never occurs to them that this prayer is first of all a personal prayer. We must pray it and realize the answer to it in personal experience before we can make it a prayer of intercession for others.

First of all, this prayer means that God must be sovereign in our own soul. Everybody would like to have God's comfort and

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[32] Rom. 14. 8.

God's protection and God's support, but not all are earnestly desiring God's sovereignty. Yet that is where this prayer begins. To pray it honestly we must ask the heavenly Father to come and reign in our lives. To ask that honestly we must be ready to put away every sin which doth so easily beset us, every evil practice, and every doubtful indulgence. We must ask for a clean heart and then we must maintain a pure life. We cannot love sin or money or pleasure or self more than we love goodness or more than we love God. He is to reign. He is to have the throne. He is to be Sovereign and he alone.

We must pray Charles Wesley's prayer,

"O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that always feels the blood
So freely shed for me.

"A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne;
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus *reigns alone*."

Or, with Sir Richard Baker, we may frame our petition thus: "Vouchsafe, O my Lord, to come with thy high majesty under my low roof and to work a miracle by having that greatness which the world containeth not contained in a little corner of my breast. Vouchsafe also to send thy grace for the harbinger of thy glory, seeing there can no room be dressed up against thy coming but only by thy coming, and no place can be reckoned fit *for* thee until it be made fit *by* thee. Possess me wholly, O my Sovereign; reign in my body by obedience to thy laws, and in my soul by confidence in thy promises. Frame my tongue to praise thee, my knees to reverence thee, my strength to serve thee, my desires to covet thee, and my heart to embrace thee; that as thou hast formed me to thine image, so thou mayest frame me to thy will, and as thou hast made me a vessel by the stamp of thy creation to serve thee on earth, so thou mayest make me a vessel of honor by the privilege of thy grace to serve thee in thy kingdom."[33] This, then, is what we pray for in this petition. First, that sin may no longer reign in our mortal bodies, but that God may set up his throne there instead. We pray for our own entire sanctification. We present our bodies a living sacrifice, that they may be holy and acceptable to God. We give ourselves to him wholly, that he may make us holy. Then, as instruments meet for the Master's use, we ask, second, that we may be serviceable in the promotion of all the interests of the Kingdom. These are the practical and personal aspects of the petition. Then, third, the prayer has a missionary outlook and includes the pledge to ceaseless evangelism until all men have come to know and serve and love our God. It is a prayer that all the remaining millions of earth may unite with the Mohammedan and the Christian and the Jew in the worship of the one God and Father of all.

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[33] Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

Fourth, it is a prayer of the whole church on earth and in heaven for the whole church, that it may be one even as Jesus and the Father are one, that it may be clean, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish before its King, that it may be freed from divisions and cleansed from corruptions and filled with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, that insofar as the church of to-day is worldly and lukewarm and blind it may be transformed into a church with vision and vitality and spirituality sufficient to pray the whole earth into its final Pentecost. It is a prayer that all church members may be Christians, living up to the New Testament standard of righteousness and peace and joy in the Spirit of glory and of God. Fifth, it is a prayer that all evil may end, all lawlessness may cease, all rebellion may be turned into loyal service of the King, so that the Father's name may be hallowed and the Father's will may be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.

Sixth, we pray for all good things. Nothing could be more comprehensive than this petition; it includes everything which we need. We ask for perfection of body, soul, and spirit for ourselves and for all men. We pray for the salvation and for the full salvation of all the race. We pray for the end of error and superstition and everything which degrades and defiles mankind. We pray for all that is true and all that is pure and all that is lovely and to be desired.

V. *Optimism of the Prayer.* We pray for all these things in faith that our prayer can be answered for ourselves now and that it will be answered in its fullness for all other men in due time. This faith is founded upon the example and the teaching of Jesus, who gave us this prayer, and upon personal experience, and upon the record of the Christian centuries. Jesus taught us that the kingdom of heaven was within men and that all good, therefore, was possible to them. We believe that the worst of men may be saved. We believe that fornicators and idolaters and adulterers and effeminate and abusers of themselves with men, and thieves and covetous and drunkards and revilers and extortioners may be washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God, and that thus they may inherit the kingdom of God. Did not Paul write to the Corinthians that this had been true of some of them?[34] Have we not ourselves seen persecutors turned into apostles, sensualists turned into saints, the most criminal become the most Christlike, the most selfish become the most sacrificing, the most sinful become the most spiritual and the most depraved transformed into new creatures in Christ Jesus? What the Spirit of God has accomplished in these men it can accomplish in others. There is no limit to the possibilities of the triumphs of supernatural power. The worst this world can furnish is not too difficult for the Father effectually to reform. That was the faith of Jesus and it is our faith as well.

Jesus believed in men so much that he believed that they could do the will of God on earth even as it is done in heaven, and therefore he told men to pray, "Thy kingdom come on earth even as it has come in heaven." Jesus believed in the Father so fully that he was sure that his power was sufficient to answer this prayer. Jesus is the supreme leader of the race because he believed so unswervingly in the triumph of the good over the bad, in the victory of truth over error, and in the sure conquest of the right over the wrong. He believed that in the long run all vice and crime and sin would pass away and that this world could and must become as heaven. He believed that all the kingdoms of Satan would become the kingdoms of God. He asked his disciples to pray for the coming of God's kingdom here upon the earth and to labor for the speedy arrival of all-dominating goodness.

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[34] 1 Cor. 6. 9-11.

The disciples of Jesus have caught something of the inspiration of the optimism of their Master. They have attacked hoary iniquities, entrenched privileges, established and seemingly impregnable fortresses of evil and have triumphed over them in the name of their Christ. They have seen civil governments improved, widespread abuses abolished, the rights of humanity recognized, and they have rejoiced in what has seemed like a steady progress toward the goal. All the victories of the past encourage them to labor and to pray for more. Even when the existing fabric of a godless and worldly civilization seemed to collapse about them they still prayed and hoped and believed that the kingdom of God would prevail even in the universal ruin and that a more godly and Christian civilization would succeed to that which so conspicuously has failed.

There have been days of sudden expansion in the history of the church, days of great prosperity. There have been days of fearful judgment upon the nations because they have refused or forsaken the commandments of God, days of great adversity. In all the changes of the centuries the disciples of Jesus have prayed this prayer, and they have had faith to believe that through all the changes the day of redemption was drawing nigh. They pray this prayer now in the unfaltering confidence that the Golden Age is in the future and not in the past, that the time will come when the bad will be replaced by the good and the good by the better and the better by the best, that the best is yet to come and that there will be steady improvement all along the line and sweeping victories toward the end.

Cowper in "The Task" has phrased the Christian faith and longing thus,

"Thus heavenward all things tend.
. . . all must be at length restored.
So God hath greatly purposed; who would else
In his dishonored works himself endure
Dishonor, and be wronged without redress.

> Haste then, and wheel away a shattered world,
> Ye slow revolving seasons! We would see
> (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
> A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
> And suffer for its crime: would learn how fair
> The creature is that God pronounces good,
> How pleasant in itself what pleases him."

There is a more happy humanity ahead of us than this earth ever has seen, a humanity in which sin and the sorrow caused by sin shall have ceased, and there will be peace instead of war, and there will be joy and contentment instead of unrest under oppression, and there will be no profligates and no paupers, and there will be no selfish competition in the universal brotherhood, when the barriers between the peoples shall be broken down, and there shall be no more hostile armies or navies or tariffs, when the nations shall be righteous and all the private and public business of men shall be conducted to the glory of God, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth even as the waters cover the sea, and when the will of God shall be done on the earth even as it is done in heaven.

Gregory of Nyssa said, "Darkness must vanish before light, disease before health, death before life."[35] That is the faith of the disciples of Jesus. He who has not that faith need not pray this prayer; for if he pray it without faith it is only a vain repetition. There are many who pray, "Thy kingdom come," without any faith that the answer to that prayer will be granted in this dispensation. They believe that this old earth must be thrown into the discard and that there must be a new Advent, a new Parousia, a second coming of the Lord in power, and then a new earth and a new heaven before we can hope that righteousness will reign. They think that this earth is doomed to slow degeneration and final dissolution, and therefore when they pray, "Thy kingdom come," they pray for the speeding up of judgment upon the hopeless derelict. Nothing ever can make it worthy to become the settled residence of the King. No improvement of conditions here is doing any more than salving a fatal wound.

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[35] De orat. iii.

They believe that the depravity of the race is inherent and indomitable. A few may be saved from hell, but this earth never can be turned into a heaven. Neither a revival in the church, nor any improvement in the state is any reason for hope in the regeneration of the present race. As far as this earth and this race are concerned they are unlimited in their pessimism. They have no courage to attempt the impossible in laboring for the introduction of the kingdom of heaven here and now. They leave that to dreamers and idealists like Jesus, who told his disciples, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."[36]

To despair of the power of the gospel to leaven all civilization and to transform the whole lump is treason to him. He told his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come," and to pray that prayer in faith that it will be heard and answered here "on earth as it is in heaven." True and faithful disciples labor in that hope. They believe that this prayer is not for the world's end but for the world's trend to better things. They expect to see the time when all preventable disease and pain and misery will be eliminated, when all environments and conditions which narrow and stunt human lives will be abolished, and when great wealth and great poverty no longer will exist side by side in civilized society, when the riches of the world will be so distributed that all honest people can have good food and decent clothes and comfortable homes and an equal opportunity of the enjoyment of the products of science, literature, and art, when there shall be no artificial distinctions in classes or castes or colors or conditions but all men shall dwell together in peace and cooperate in brotherhood for the community welfare and the world's uplift into the kingdom of God upon earth. He who believes in the certainty of the realization of this possibility will work toward its accomplishment, and he can pray this prayer with faith, as the pessimistic premillennialist cannot.

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[36] Matt. 13. 33.

First of all, the Kingdom is a gift to be received in each individual life and then it becomes an ideal to be achieved in universal life. Complete personal victory will be the best reason for an abiding hope of universal victory at last.

PART FIVE

THE THIRD PETITION

June 10
Webster

PART FIVE

THE THIRD PETITION

I. *Relations.* The third petition is a climax in the series of three. When God's name is hallowed and his kingdom has come, his will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. What is heaven? Heaven is the place or condition in which the Father's name is kept holy, and the Father's rule is acknowledged and obeyed, and the Father's will is fulfilled in all things. We pray that this earth may become such a place, and that all the inhabitants of this earth may make the divine will the law of their lives because it is the delight of their souls.

Some have considered the third petition the climax and center of the whole prayer. As the first petitions lead up to it, the succeeding petitions suggest the conditions necessary for its fulfillment. Our daily bread is provided, our sins are forgiven, and we are preserved in temptation and delivered from evil in order that the will of God may be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.

The second and third petitions are nearly allied. The third explains how the second is to be fulfilled. However, there is a clear distinction between them. In the second we pray that God may rule; in the third we ask that men may obey God's rule. In the second we pray that God may be our King; in the third we ask that we may be his willing subjects. The second looks toward God; the third begins to look toward this earth. In the fourth petition, Give us our bread, we are thinking wholly of ourselves and our needs.

II. *Rabbinic Parallels.* This third petition has its parallels in the sayings of the rabbis, and it may be that Jesus adapted its phraseology from some of these. "Rabbi Jehudah ben Thema said, 'Be bold as a leopard, and swift as an eagle, and fleet as a hart, and strong as a lion, to do the will of thy Father which is in heaven.' "[1] Here we have the address of the Disciples' Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven," and the exhortation to do his will. Rabbi Eliezer had put this exhortation into the form of a prayer. He said, "What is the *oratio brevis* (or short prayer)? It is, Do thy will in heaven, and give quietness of spirit to them that fear thee beneath (or, on earth)."[2]

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[1] Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, p. 95.

[2] Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

There is just a suggestion of selfishness in this prayer, for the inference is that if God's will is done, his children will reap the benefit of that fact in quietness of spirit. This insidious selfishness is still more apparent in the saying of Rabbi Gamaliel, "Do his will as if it were thy will, that he may do thy will as if it were his will. Annul thy will before his will, that he may annul the will of others before thy will."[3] If Jesus had heard these sayings and if he found in them the suggestion of his prayer, we may be sure that he purged them of all selfishness of thought and desire before he gave this model and central and climaxing petition to his disciples. He desired the Father's will to be done for no other reason than that it was the Father's will. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."[4] There was no selfish admixture in his prayer. It was purely devotional and spiritual.

III. *Useless.* Was it a useless prayer? Augustine declared that the kingdom of God would come whether we willed it or not.[5] He was mistaken about that, as he was in the further suggestion that we prayed for the coming of the Kingdom simply that we might stir up our own desires for that kingdom and thus be found worthy to reign in it. We are not praying for subjective effects, but for objective results in these petitions; and the kingdom of the Father never will come until we will it and are ready to work for it with might and main; and when it comes no one will be reigning over anybody else, but the chief among men will be the servant of all. Tertullian thought that there was no power which could prevent God's will from being done, whether we prayed that it might be so or not.[6] God rules this universe. His will is done in every part of it. He made it, and in every portion of it he ever will be supreme. Cyprian asked, "Who hath resisted—who can resist his will?"[7]

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[3] Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[4] Matt. 11. 26.

[5] Augustine, ep. cxxx ad Probam, 21.

Nebuchadnezzar tried it, but was brought to confess, "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doeth thou?"[8] Nebuchadnezzar had defied the Almighty, according to the tradition, and had been smitten with insanity and made to wander like a beast in the fields until he acknowledged God's sovereignty. There is a like tradition among the ancient Greeks. Kapaneus rushed up the scaling ladder at the siege of Thebes, shouting, "I will take the city, whether Zeus wills it or not!" and the story goes that at that moment a thunderbolt from heaven struck him dead. The psalmist had stated the truth, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."[9]

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[6] Tertullian, de orat. iv.

[7] Cyprian, de orat. Dom. xiv.

[8] Dan. 4. 35.

The tidal waves, the stars in their courses, the laws of nature and the ordinances of heaven are established by him and maintained in their unvarying precision. It was believed by many that what was true of nature and of Providence was equally true in the realm of grace and of God's dealing with man. We do not think so now. We do not believe in irresistible grace and irreversible election and reprobation. If we did believe these things, this prayer would seem to us needless and useless.

We believe that there are many things which are contrary to God's will. We believe that all evil resulting from sin is opposed to the divine will. We agree with Cleanthes, who said, "Nothing takes place on earth apart from thee, nor in the heaven above, nor in the deep, except the things which bad men do in their senselessness, . . . who neither perceive nor listen to the common law of God." Vice and lust are not according to God's will. Envy and malice and selfish competition do not represent God's will. War and airplane bombs and poison gas and all the slaughter and devastation and waste of national and international conflicts are contrary to God's will. Misery and poverty and oppression are not here because God willed them to be here. They are here because man willed them to be here and because man's will came into conflict with the will of God.

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[9] Psa. 135. 6.

It is entirely too easy a philosophy or faith which concludes that whatever happens, and whatever is, is God's will for the individual or for the world. The Mohammedan says, "Kismet; it is fate," and folds his hands submissively while the cholera decimates his villages and takes his dearest friends. The Christian cannot do that. He believes that cholera can be prevented and that it is God's will that men shall find and use the means to prevent it.

Lord Melbourne went away from church one day very much exasperated because the preacher, as he said, was "one of those pestilent fellows" who supposed that religion had to do with a man's private life. This same Lord Melbourne was prime minister of England when a pestilence swept through the land and the church leaders asked him to proclaim a day of national humiliation and fasting and prayer; and he refused to do it. He said, "Let your men of science find out the cause of the plague and we will very soon put a stop to it." The old scoffer talked like a Christian there.

A fire is discovered to be smoldering in a ship's hold. Every effort to extinguish it proves unavailing. Does the captain say, "It evidently is God's will that we should perish here in mid-ocean, and his will be done"? Neither the captain nor the crew nor the passengers would be willing to say that. The hatches are battened down, all the vent pipes are hooded, an extinguishing gas is pumped into the hold and the passengers are all assigned to lifeboats, while the vessel's course is changed and all speed is made for the nearest shore. Everybody on board would suspect that it was not God's will for them to perish in the flames but rather that all possible means should be used in order that they might be rescued.

That ship might symbolize the world of

to-day. Sparks are smoldering in its depths and it is only a question how soon the flames will burst forth. Terrific energies have been gathering within it. Sooner or later an appalling catastrophe may shatter all our smiling civilization and consume our most precious achievements in its burning heat. Revolution is at hand; and there are those who seem disposed to wait in stoical callousness what seems to them inevitable. It is the will of God, and it will surely come, and no man knows just when it will be: so there is nothing to be done about it, and we must simply muddle along and make the best of things as they are. That is not the Christian's attitude. He does not believe in acquiescence in any evil or in quiescence in the presence of any evil.

It is not in the presence of any preventable evil that he is ready to say,

> "Let me be still and murmur not,
> But breathe the prayer divinely taught—
> 'Thy will be done.'"

He believes that this prayer was divinely taught him in order to waken within him a discontent with all the evils there are and a determination to bring about their extermination and their replacement with all the good things that ought to be.

He believes that health ought to replace disease. He will not suffer from insomnia brought on by the excessive use of coffee or tobacco, or from dyspepsia and gout brought on by excessive and luxurious living, or from diphtheria and pneumonia brought on by personal carelessness and neglect, and then talk piously about submission to the will of God. He will not believe that all suffering comes from God and represents his will. He will be prone to believe that all preventable suffering and all remediable suffering may be contrary to God's will.

He is sure that it is not a time for resignation when the rich are helping to make this earth a hell for the poor in the hope that it will give them a greater longing for heaven. Much of the misery of poverty could be prevented in a Christian society: it is not God's will that men should starve in lands blessed with plentiful natural resources or that illiteracy should prevail among peoples capable of supporting many millionaires and colossal corporations. It was in view of such conditions that Ebenezer Elliott wrote a hymn,

"Shall crime bring crime forever,
  Strength aiding still the strong?
Is it thy will, O Father,
  That man shall toil for wrong?

"'No,' say thy mountains; 'No,' thy skies;
Man's clouded sun shall brightly rise,
And songs ascend instead of sighs.
God save the people'"

It is not God's will that a few should be wasters and the many should be slaves; and therefore chattel slavery has been abolished in all Christian lands. It is not God's will that industry should be hampered and home happiness should be destroyed because men have become slaves to drink, and, therefore, prohibition has been established by law in the leading nation of the world. It is not the will of God that the opium traffic should be forced upon India in order that British revenues may be increased, or that graft and corruption should flourish in American civic and national politics, or that the nations of the earth should be carrying staggering burdens of naval and military armaments prepared for their mutual destruction.

Therefore we who pray the Lord's Prayer do not quietly and patiently submit to these things but make our eternal protest against them and do our best endeavor to eliminate all these things from human society and to wipe them from the face of the earth. Ruskin said that many of the most devoted Christians said the words of this third petition "as if the

Father's will were always to kill their babies, or do something unpleasant to them," and therefore they must pray this prayer in a spirit of abject resignation. Jesus said, "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish,"[10] and it is not the will of God that any unnecessary or avoidable evil should befall us.

IV. *God's Two Wills.* The will of God for us is all good and nothing but good. He has an ideal plan for every man and for the race. It includes our protection from every possible evil and every possible perfecting of our character, but it also includes the freedom of the human will; and if we choose evil and pursue it, we thwart the divine will for us in our human perversity. God has two wills for us, a best and a second best: or, possibly, we ought to say that he has one will for us which we are privileged to reject and then that he has many alternative wills which are the best possible under the circumstances we ourselves create.

Chrysostom made the distinction between God's antecedent will, *θέλημα προηγούμενον* and his secondary will, *θέλημα δεύτρον.*[11] The Scriptures are filled with illustrations of this distinction. The prophet in Babylon cried to the people in the name of the Lord, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. . . . There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked."[12] If Israel had not been disobedient it was the will of God that her peace should have been like the great river and her righteousness like the great ocean; but it was also his will that there should be no peace to the wicked. It was his antecedent will that Israel should be good and only his alternative will that Israel should be punished. In the eighty-first psalm we read:

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[10] Matt. 18. 14.

[11] Chrysostom, hom. in Eph. i, 766.

"My people would not hearken to my voice;
And Israel would none of me.
So I gave them up unto their own heart's
lust;
And they walked in their own counsels.
O that my people had hearkened unto me,
And Israel had walked in my ways!
I should soon have subdued their enemies,
And turned my hand against their adversaries."[13]

It had been God's will that they should have victory, but they had walked in their own counsels to defeat. Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem and said: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."[14] The antecedent will of God was Jerusalem's salvation; in the event of the Messiah's rejection his will was her desolation.

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[12] Isa. 48. 18, 22.

[13] Psa. 81. 11-13.

We pray that God's first will for us may be realized. We pray that his will may not only triumph over us and against us but in us and through us. We pray that we may concur with God's will and co-operate with it. We pray that it may be done by us as well as for us. We acknowledge that the Father's will is best and that it will be wisest for us to fall into line with his purpose and plan for our lives. By that faith we test all promised good. If any honor or distinction is offered us, we ask whether it is according to God's will, and if it is not, we account all such honor but shame. If any pleasure is promised us, we ask God's pleasure concerning it, and if it does not meet with his approval, we consider it but misery.

We mistake our present satisfaction for our highest good. The Father sees the end from the beginning and knows what is best. Adam and Eve preferred the eating of an apple to the doing of God's will and suffered the dire consequence to the end of their lives. Cain did his own will and murdered his brother and was a branded outcast as long as he lived. Joseph would have preferred not to be sold into captivity and not to be falsely accused and not to be thrown into prison, but in the end it was apparent that all that sad experience was only the way to the throne and to the fulfillment of God's will concerning him as revealed in his boyhood's dream.

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[14] Matt. 23. 37, 38.

Saul disobeyed the plain command of God, preferring his own conclusions as to proper behavior, and so lost his kingdom and his life. Moses shrank from the mission upon which God would send him, but yielding to God's will, came to the greatest distinction in his race. Lot made a shrewd choice and showed that he was clever in business, but came to loss of wife and fortune and great disaster. On the other hand, Abraham did the will of God and became the Friend of God and the Father of the Faithful. Daniel defied the will of the king in order that he might do the will of God, and by the way of the lions' den came to the second place in the kingdom. Faber was right when he sang:

"Ills that God blesses are my good—
All unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be his dear will."

Browning has expressed the same faith in more sturdy fashion, as follows:

"God is all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good:
I speak to those alone who hold him so;
All-wise, and knoweth therefore what is best;
All-good, and willeth therefore what is best;
All-powerful—can do, therefore, what is best;
And if he can, why, must. Where Knowledge, Will,
And Power combine, what else results but this? . . .
All that is, is best,
Wear it to us what face it may; for God,
All-wise, all-good, all-potent wills it so."

V. *Resignation.* God's will is our weal. Therefore if we pray for success, we pray for it only in accordance with God's will, for otherwise we know it will be a curse and not a blessing. We pray for health, only if it be God's will, for sickness may help us to righteousness and holiness of life. We pray for peace, if it be God's will, knowing that struggle and trial may make us all the more sturdy saints. Sarah Adams sings,

"He sendeth sun, he sendeth shower,
Alike they're needful for the flower;
And joys and tears alike are sent
To give the soul fit nourishment:]
As comes to me, or cloud or sun,
Father, thy will, not mine, be done!"

The last words of Richard Baxter were, "Lord, what thou wilt, where thou wilt, when thou wilt." He spoke in the very spirit of Christ. When Jeremy Taylor, the Shakespeare of the pulpit, was afflicted, he said, "I must bear this affliction inevitably, and by God's grace I shall try to bear it nobly." We remember that Jesus not only gave us this petition but he sanctified it by his own use. This was his prayer in Gethsemane, "Thy will be done." It was the expression of his utter submission and resignation to the Father's desire.

Bishop Butler said, "Resignation to the will of God is the whole of piety."[15] It was one of the maxims of Epictetus, "Wish nothing but what God wishes."

Pythagoras said to his friend, "May you have from the gods whatever you wish."

"By no means," the friend replied. "I would rather wish to have whatever the gods shall give me."

That was the spiritual attitude of Jesus. He gave us the pattern in precept and then he showed us the pattern in practice. He said to the listening multitude, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."[16] He said to his disciples, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."[17] Then he said of himself in the beginning of his ministry, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[18]

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[15] Butler, *Sermons*, xiv. 3.

Later in his ministry he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."[19] Later still he gave us the actuating motive of all his activity when he said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me";[20] and again, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."[21] The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declared that Jesus fulfilled the psalmist's prophecy, saying, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."[22] Then at the end he prayed as he always had prayed, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."[23]

Therefore we look to Jesus to see what a life in accordance with God's will is. Cyprian said, "The will of God is that which Christ both did and taught. Humility in behavior, steadfastness in faith, modesty in speech, righteousness in action, mercifulness in works, self-discipline in character, incapacity to inflict an injury, readiness to endure it patiently when inflicted, peaceableness toward brethren, whole-hearted devotion to God, love toward him as Father, sacred fear of him as God."

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[16] Matt. 7. 21.

[17] Matt. 12. 50. Mark 3. 35.

[18] Matt. 4. 4.

[19] John 4. 34.

[20] John 5. 30.

[21] John 6. 38.

[22] Psa. 40. 7, 8. Heb. 10. 7, 9.

[23] Matt. 26. 39.

Here is the pattern, and Cyprian adds, "To prefer nothing in the world to Christ, to cling inseparably to his love, to stand patiently and trustfully beside his cross when his name or honor is at stake; to display self-possession in speech when we are called to confess him, confidence in trial when we meet our foes, and in death patience which obtains the crown—this is to be a co-heir of Christ, to fulfill the commandment of God, to do the will of the Father."[24] Jesus did the will of the Father; to be like Jesus is for us to do the Father's will. In the life of Jesus we see how the will of God can be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven.

He set God always before him. The zeal for God's house ate him up. The love of the Father possessed him. He was dependent upon God for everything. Of his teaching he said,

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[24] Cyprian, de orat. Dom., xv.

"The words that I speak unto you I speak not from myself,"[25] and "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."[26] Of his miracles he said, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works,"[27] and "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."[28] He prayed for grace and he prayed for power. He was subject to the Spirit's guidance in everything. He willed to do the Father's will and so he came to know the truth and to be able to preach it and live it.

He proclaimed the Father's will to others, and he accepted it for himself. He began by being good and he went about doing good. He was devout, reverent, daring. His life was full of difficulty and full of poise. His faith was unwavering, his fidelity unfailing, his service unselfish and absolute. We look at his life and we say, "As in heaven." We know that the will of God can be done on earth even as it is done in heaven, for the life of the man Jesus proved it. He submitted to the will of God in everything, and he co-operated with the will of God in everything. There is both a passive and an active side to this petition, and both sides were illustrated equally in Jesus.

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[25] John 14. 10.

[26] John 7. 16.

[27] John 14. 10.

[28] John 5. 36.

Thy will be done—it is a prayer of resignation. When calamity has come upon us, it is the cry of Job, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Let his will be done, even though the heavens may seem to fall upon our heads." Charlotte Elliott put this spirit of resignation into her hymn,

> "If thou shouldst call me to resign
> What most I prize—it ne'er was mine:
> I only yield thee what was thine;
> Thy will be done!"

When the agonies of Gethsemane came upon him, Jesus prayed, "Let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."[29] In that "nevertheless" there was absolute resignation and submission. All of that passive dependence and trust and resignation is in this third petition, but that represents only a portion of its meaning, for we pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and in heaven the will of God is done not in passive endurance and submission, but in active obedience and service. The will of God is done, not suffered, there. That additional clause makes it clear that the prayer is one for active rather than passive obedience, for the obedience of the spirits who dwell where no sorrow and no calamity can come. They *do* the commandments of the Lord and obey the voice of his word. We pray that our obedience may be like theirs.

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[29] Matt. 26. 39.

VI. *Obedience.* They remember God's will and they approve it and they love it and then they *do* it. Like the Master, they delight to *do* God's will. So when we pray this prayer we are putting Paul's question, "Lord, what shall I do?"[30] This is not a prayer for the sick-room and the death-chamber alone; it is also a prayer for the days in which we are well and strong. It is not only a prayer for the invalid but a prayer for the spiritual athlete as well. It is not merely a prayer for times of distress but a prayer for all times and for the active duties of every day. This is a prayer for perfect and continuous and universal obedience to the will of God and service to the world of men. It was a saying of the rabbis, "The day is short, the work abundant, the laborers remiss, the reward great, the Master presses; therefore be bold as a leopard, swift as an eagle, bounding as a stag, brave as a lion, to do the will of thy Father who is in heaven."

VII. *Hard to Pray.* It is no light thing to pray this prayer and mean it. We have said it so often and we have said it so easily, and many never have realized that the answering of that prayer would be immeasurably difficult. Millions repeat it daily and yet never have done the will of God perfectly and continuously in any one day of their lives. It is a hard prayer to pray in both its passive and its active aspects. It is hard for that mother to stand by the grave of her child and say, "Thy will be done." It is hard for that man who sees the property which he has accumulated by the toil of many years swept away in some physical or financial flood and still be able to say, "Thy will be done." It is hard for that sufferer from cancer or consumption or any other hopeless plague to say, "Thy will be done."

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[30] Acts 22. 10.

Archbishop Whately lay in his last sickness. He said to his chaplain one day, "Have you ever preached from the words, 'Thy will be done'? How do you explain it?" The chaplain told him and the Archbishop replied, "Just so: but it is hard, very hard, sometimes, to say it!" It is hard sometimes to say it with perfect resignation. It is just as hard at all times to say it in perfect consecration. Yet there is no use in saying it at all, unless we mean what we say.

Thy will be done—that means the absolute resignation of our own wills to God's will and the absolute consecration of our own lives to his service. Thy will be done—that means that we are willing that our own whims and our own preferences, and even our most passionate desires, shall be set aside if it be the will of God that they shall go. Thy will be done—that means that we are praying and that we are willing not to have our own way in anything, however pleasant and promising it may seem to us, but to go God's way even though it be to Gethsemane and Calvary.

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification,"[31] Paul said. It is the will of God that our body, soul, and spirit "be preserved entire, blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."[32] It is the will of God that we be made "perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ."[33] It is the will of God that we put ourselves into his hands that he may save us, purify us, perfect us, until we seek to do his will in thought, word, and deed.

The Lord said to Moses, concerning his

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[31] 1 Thess. 4. 3.

[32] 1 Thess. 5. 23.

[33] Heb. 13. 21.

people, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep *all my commandments always,* that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!"[34] It is the will of God to-day that all of his children shall do all of his commandments always. This is the Prayer of Obedience. It can be answered only by constant and perfect obedience to the will of God. Each one who prays this prayer must say, "O Lord God, let it be the pleasure of thy will, that I may take pleasure in doing thy will; for unless it be thy pleasure, it can never be my will."

Sir Richard Baker comments: "Many can say this petition devoutly enough, so long as they understand it not; but when they are told how Christ said it, 'Not my will, but thy will,' and thereby come to know, that to pray for the doing of God's will, is to pray against doing their own wills—against their unlawful lusts, against their covetous desires, against their ambitious designs, against their malicious practices, and such like, then it strikes cold to their hearts; their tongues cleave to the roof of their mouth and they could wish the petition might never be made. But he that understands it, and yet stands to it; he that speaks it more from his heart than with his tongue; he that is resolved to say it, because he saith as he is resolved, this man makes it a prayer for himself, and a hallelujah to God; and shall reap the fruit of both in due time; to the other, it proves but as the sacrifice of fools; and if it make a noise, it is but as the tinkling of a cymbal; a music at which God stops his ears, only the devil makes himself merry."[35]

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[34] Deut. 5. 29.

It would be so easy to do the will of God a part of the time only and only when we had a mind to do it or when the temptation to do something else was not particularly urgent. It would be comparatively easy to keep the greater part of the law of God if we might ignore some portions of it, and if we might indulge now and then in some easily besetting sin. It is an entirely different thing to keep all the commandments of God always, to obey the will of God in everything, to live in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. No one can pray this prayer sincerely and effectually who is not earnestly desiring the highest and best in his own life and in the world. If he is satisfied with anything less, his prayer becomes measurably insincere and ineffective.

VIII. *Comprehensiveness.* We begin to realize how comprehensive this third petition is. First of all it is a Gethsemane prayer of resignation, "Thy will be done in whatever may befall us." Then, it is a prayer of dependence. In his *Journal* Samuel Johnson noted this resolution, "To consider the act of prayer as a reposal of myself upon God, and a resignation of all into his holy hand."[36] This prayer is a prayer of resignation in the sense of submission, and also of resignation in the sense of consecration and receptivity. It is not God's will that we be poor in soul, even if we may be poor in this world's goods. It is his will that we be millionaires in grace. Then, it is a prayer of active devotion, asking that we may be made the instruments through which the will of God may be accomplished in the world.

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[35] Baker, *op. cit.*, pp. 106, 107.

It is a prayer for all sinners, for all who resist and ignore the will of God, for all who ignorantly or consciously thwart his purposes, that they may know his will and submit to his rule. It is a prayer for the church, that it may be delivered from worldliness and all allegiance to mammon or militarism, all coldness and lukewarmness and lack of faith and love. It is a prayer for the whole world, that it may become devoted to God, pure in life, and righteous in dealing, and that the highest standards of life may be maintained everywhere. It is a prayer for the salvation of all men.

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[36] Johnson, *Journal*, p. 123.

God our Saviour "would have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."[37] We pray that this will of God may be done in the rescuing of all of his creatures who are undone. We pray for universal salvation. It is a prayer for the reconciliation of all things, promised in Colossians 1. 20 and Ephesians 1. 10. It is a prayer for the *palingenesia,* the regeneration of all things, promised to Peter and the disciples by the Master.[38] It is a prayer for the *apokatastasis,* the restoration of all things, promised by God by the mouth of his holy prophets who have been of old, and repeated by Peter in his speech in Solomon's Porch.[39] There could be no greater prayer than this. It sums up everything that is good. It asks that earth may be as heaven. It asks that everything and everybody may be just what it or he ought to be. It asks that every individual may be wholly consecrated and every family may be wholly saved, and every nation may be a holy nation and that the whole round world be bound by golden chains of faith and love to the throne of God. It is only gradually that we can rise to the grandeur of this petition. It is only gradually that we can expect to receive its answers, outside ourselves.

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[37] 1 Tim. 2. 4.

[38] Matt. 19. 28.

[39] Acts 3. 21.

Jesus did not tell us to say, “Thy will be done” at once, so that we might expect the answers to the prayer immediately. He said, “Thy will *become,*”[40] and that suggests that the answer to our prayer will be progressive and in proportion to our devotion and our effort. It will be coming through the ages, eternally becoming, and it will be come only in the great consummation when all things shall be summed up in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth, and the heavens and the earth together will constitute a Christian universe.

IX. *As in Heaven.* We have not yet asked the meaning of that appended clause, “on earth as in heaven.” Many different interpretations have been given it. Augustine suggested in one passage that “heaven” meant the saints and “earth” stood for ordinary Christians, and therefore the prayer meant that we desired that all Christians might do the will of God just as fully as the best of the saints. Origen had lifted this suggestion one step higher when, in his treatise on Prayer, he said that "heaven" might signify Christ and "earth" the church,[41] and it meant that we desired that the church might do always those things that please God even as Jesus did.

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[40] *γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου.*

Tertullian and Cyprian thought that the terms "heaven" and "earth" were equivalent to spirit and flesh, and we prayed that the flesh might be subdued to the spirit, so that every thought and impulse might be obedient to the spirit of Christ. Some have thought of the visible heavens, as they prayed this prayer, and to them the steadfastness and the order and the unfailing obedience of the constellations suggested a petition for like continuance in well-doing and in unfailing obedience on the part of men. Cyril of Jerusalem and others thought of the angelic hosts, and probably most of those who pray this prayer to-day think of the worshiping and serving hosts of heaven as the pattern for our worship and service on earth.

Bishop Andrewes makes the quaint remark in this connection that "adverbs please God better than verbs," by which he means that God may be pleased more by the manner in which a thing is done than by the mere doing of it. He desires that even on earth his will may be done angelically. How do the angels obey? Richard Baxter said that they obeyed "understandingly, speedily, sincerely, fully, readily, delightedly, unweariedly, and concordantly." There are enough adverbs to be pleasing even to God. Robert Hill said that the angels obeyed "willingly, without murmuring; speedily, without delaying; constantly, without ceasing; universally, without omitting."[42] John Wesley interpreted this petition to mean that the whole race of mankind might obey God as willingly and as continually and as perfectly as the holy angels do. "We pray that we may do the whole will of God, as he willeth, in a manner that pleases him; and lastly, that we may do it because it is his will; that this may be the sole reason and ground, the whole and only motive, of whatsoever we think, or whatsoever we speak or do."[43] This simply reproduces what Wesley had written in his notebook while he was a resident at Oxford, "To do thy will as the angels in heaven: 1. To do nothing but thy will, and everything which is so. 2. To do all things thou willest only in the manner thou willest. 3. To do all the things thou willest in this manner only because thou willest."

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[41] Origen, de orat. xxvi, 3.

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[42] Hill, *The Pathway to Piety*, vol. i, p. 139.

[43] Wesley, *Sermons*, vol. i, p. 240.

The angels do the whole will of God. They do it absolutely. We cannot imagine any partial obedience with them. They do the will of God readily. They run and fly on God's errands. There is no hanging back, no lagging footstep, no dilatory performance of God's will. They do it cheerfully. It is their greatest joy, their constant delight. They do it unselfishly, out of love to God and to the glory of God and with no thought of individual or selfish reward. Therefore, they do it harmoniously, without envy or jealousy or discontent, but in perfect love and perfect concord and perfect peace.

Richard Hooker lay upon his deathbed and when he was asked what he was thinking about he said that he was meditating the number and the nature of the angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace would be impossible in heaven, and then he added, "Oh! that it might be so on earth!" Is it too much to ask? Can earth ever be like heaven? Can men ever rival the angels? Not in equality of ability or of result, but in quality of motive and fullness of consecration. "Not that our vessels can be as bright as theirs, but be as clean; and not hold as much, but be as full."[44] The worship in heaven is by all, and by all together, and with all the mind and heart and soul and strength, and always: free, individual, universal, intelligent, loyal, ungrudging, and unceasing.

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[44] Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

There is not a murmur nor a complaint nor a thought of heavy burden or cross anywhere in heaven. The existence of such a thing would be the beginning of rebellion in heaven's courts. There the will of God is supreme and there is unquestioning loyalty to that will and delight in it on the part of every subject of the King. We believe that is a possibility upon the earth and with every one, unquestioning loyalty to the King and consequent delight in doing his will. Can we do the will of God as the angels do it in heaven? In degree, No; in kind, Yes. What did the psalmist say of these angels? They are the ones who are mighty in strength. We are not mighty in strength. We excel in weakness rather. The Father does not expect from us the service which he expects from angels. They are the eldest-born; we are the youngest. The earthly father does not put upon the four-year-old the responsibilities which he puts upon the youth of four-and-twenty. The heavenly Father is equally reasonable in his requirements with his children. He puts upon the youngest and weakest only such a burden as it can bear with ease and delight. He has said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light; my ways are ways of pleasantness and my paths are peace." For me to do the will of God is to do what he asks of me; and he asks of me only what I can do.

When I pray, "Our Father who art in heaven," I express my faith in him, my faith that he will exercise a Father's wisdom and a Father's goodness in every dispensation of his providence and manifestation of his will concerning me. When I pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," I express my loyalty to him, and I pledge my loving devotion to his cause. I say, "I delight to do thy will, O God. It is my meat and my drink to do the will of Him who hath sent me. Whatsoever I do, whether I eat or I drink, I will do all to the glory of God." No angel in heaven could say more; and the Father is pleased with this willing, joyous, loyal, loving service from even his weakest child. It is not the service itself which he cares for so much. It is the spirit of service which is all-important to him; and a man's spirit can be as willing as that of an angel. A man can give to God the obedience of loving devotion, the obedience of joyous alacrity, the obedience of continuous delight.

There are those who do the will of God with continuous delight; and they walk in the midst of the garden of God's pleasures, and enjoy the sweet scents and gather handfuls of flowers. There are others who do God's will, not because they love him and because they love to do it, but from a sense of duty merely; and Duty is a hard taskmaster, with a still, white face. And in proportion as they allow Love to die out of their hearts and Duty to dominate their lives, in the same degree they lose the sense of pleasure in service, the flowers slip away from their grasp; and at last their ways are no longer ways of pleasantness and their paths are no longer paths of peace, but they turn their backs upon the garden of God's delights, prepared for those who love and serve him; and Duty drives them out into the desert amid the whirling, gray sand without a single flower to comfort them or a drop of water to cool their tongue.

Is the meaning clear? The Christian life ought to be the happiest life man can know, and it is; but there is a deal of so-called Christianity in the world which is but a travesty of the real. Those who indulge in it are among the most miserable of men. Is the service of Christ a heavy cross? It is because that service is a duty and not a delight.

"Are you intending to unite with the church?"

"Well, yes, it seems very clear that the church represents the respectable elements of the community; and it stands for the uplifting influences of every kind; and so I think it is the duty of every good citizen to give it his presence and support; and for that reason I think I will unite with the church." Many a man with an air of condescending self-sacrifice and something of the mien of a martyr has offered himself for church membership simply because he felt it was his duty to ally himself with a good institution such as he conceived the church to be. Then, with the obligations of church membership upon him, he enters upon one type of so-called Christian service.

"Here is this good and worthy cause which we are presenting to the people. I would like to have you contribute as liberally as you are able. It is the missionary cause. We are endeavoring to send the gospel into all the world. Of course, you are deeply interested in the salvation of the heathen."

"Well, no, to tell the truth, the heathen never bother me in the least. I never give a thought to them year in and year out. They are on the other side of the globe, and I find enough on this side to think about; but if it is my duty to give to this cause—why, I expect to do my duty, now that I have joined the church. How much do you think I ought to give?"

And, with an air of condescending self-sacrifice and something of the mien of a martyr, for the times are hard and money is scarce, and if a man has not much grace it takes a good deal of grit for him to give to anything, he loosens his pursestrings and squeezes out a few quarters, and then does not sleep well for the whole week which follows; but he has done his duty, and he has that satisfaction.

"Are you going to the service to-night?"

"Well, I suppose I shall have to. I would much prefer to stay here in my room and be comfortable. I have no doubt that I would enjoy this book much more than anything I will hear there; but I suppose it is my duty to go."

So he kicks off his slippers and draws on his shoes with a scowl on his face and a protest in his heart; but nevertheless he is determined to do his duty at any sacrifice.

That will be sufficient to suggest to us one type of experience in the church membership. That is not the lowest type in the community by any means. There are plenty of people who

duty with
delight

know that it is their *duty* to belong to church; and yet they do *not* unite with it. There are plenty of people who know that it is their *duty* to contribute to the different benevolent causes, and yet they do *not* contribute. There are plenty of people who know that they ought to go to meetings and yet they do not do it; and they do not begin to compare in moral character and general usefulness with any people who know their duty and do it. Yet, while that is true and those who do the will of God from a sense of duty only do not represent the lowest type in any community by any means, we have no hesitancy in saying that they come more nearly to doing the will of God as it is done in hell than doing the will of God as it is done in heaven! Their service may not be an absolutely coerced and compulsory one, but it is a service from a sense of obligation, full of constraint and complaint, and with cross after cross to carry with reluctant feet through the whirling gray sand of a spiritually desert waste. That is not service on earth as in heaven.

Here is the foundation for all our prayers. Whatever we may ask for ourselves is subordinate to this petition. All our individual petitions, all the minute details of our desires, are secondary to this supreme desire. It subserves and includes anything else and everything else for which we pray. It underlies all our other praying. Whittier put his faith into his verse,

> "The dear Lord hears and pities all;
> He knoweth all our wants;
> And what we blindly ask of him
> His love withholds or grants.
>
> "And so I sometimes think our prayers
> Might well be merged in one;
> And nest and perch and hearth and church
> Repeat 'Thy will be done.'"[45]

If we ask for anything which is contrary to God's will, this petition means that we desire that our askings may be rejected. Our fundamental prayer is that God's will may be done and we have no thought of substituting our will for God's will and we have no desire to impose our will upon God by our importunity or in any other way. Some people seem to think that prayer is a means for getting their own way and that importunate prayer, prayers strong enough and long enough, will force God's hand to deliver the good desired. They seem to think that the bolder and more brazen they are in their requests the surer they are to receive. The apostle John knew better. He said, "This is the confidence that we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us."[46] Our desire is to ask for nothing in prayer which is contrary to God's will. Our faith is that if we do so ask our prayer cannot be granted, no matter how importunate we may be.

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[45] "The Common Question."

X. *Possibility.* Is it possible for the human will to come into this permanent condition of submission to the will of God in everything? Of course it is possible, or Jesus never would have taught us to pray for it. We know it is possible, for Jesus himself realized the possibility in human flesh. Whatever achievement in moral character the grace of God made possible to him the same grace can make possible to us, if we will permit it. We too can say, "I have come to do thy will, O God." We too can say,

"Our wills are ours, we know not how:
Our wills are ours, to make them thine."

We believe that the Lord never would have told us to pray for anything the Father was not willing to give us. The very fact that Jesus suggested or commanded this prayer promises and pledges Omnipotence to answer it. If the will of God cannot be done by us on earth even as it is done by the angels in heaven, then Jesus told his disciples to waste their breath in the vain repetition of a meaningless prayer, which God never intended to answer and which God would find it impossible to answer if he so desired. We do not believe that Jesus would have done that, and we do not believe in a God of that sort.

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[46] 1 John 5. 14.

We have read in Roman history of that cruelly insane Emperor Caligula, that it was one of his unpardonable freaks to have his laws written in very fine letters and then to have them posted on very high columns where no one could read them, and then to kill people for not reading them and knowing them and obeying them. We say that Caligula was cruelty incarnate; and he had no right to ask the impossible of people or to punish them for what they could not help. Even so, it seems to us that the man or the woman who says that the Lord commanded his people to pray for the impossible is putting a Caligula on heaven's throne. That is either an unjustifiable degradation put upon the disciples or it is a most dishonorable imputation cast upon our God. We do not believe in a God of that sort. The Father who is in heaven, whose name we with all sincerity hallow, and for the coming of whose kingdom we plead, never will ask his children to do the impossible.

If Jesus then tells us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven," he tells us at the same time to expect the answer to that prayer and never to be satisfied until we do receive the answer and never to venture upon the following petitions until we have prayed the first three fervently and effectively; for the Lord's Prayer is a chain of six links which binds man's soul to God's throne, and if the communication is to be perfect every link must be secure. It all hangs or falls together. If there is one broken link, if it is impossible to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, then it will be impossible for God's kingdom to come on this earth, and then it will be impossible for man's sins to be forgiven or for the race ever to be delivered from evil. We cannot pray any other of these prayers and expect an answer, if we cannot expect an answer to this. They all hinge on each. If the answer to this petition, "Thy will be done," is an impossibility, that settles the whole question. That proves the impossibility of an answer to any of the other petitions. The whole prayer is a farce. The command to pray it is a piece of refined cruelty. Every vain repetition of it stultifies the human soul and degrades its conception of the unhearing and unanswering God.

We believe that God does answer prayer. We believe that if any man is ready to say to the Father, "I will willingly, joyously, loyally, lovingly trust thee and serve thee all my life," then he can pray, "Thy will be done in me and for me and through me on earth as it is done in heaven," and the Father will give him grace to do his will even as the angels do it, in the same spirit and equally acceptable in his sight, though not in the same way and not in the same degree. Then that man may know that the Father heareth him in whatsoever he may ask in accordance with the Father's will and that he has the petitions he may ask of him. He has linked up with Omnipotence. He has made contact with the Central Power. He is working in harmony with the laws of God and with the will of God. All things become possible in that relation between the will of man and the will of God. We say that it is perfectly possible for any man to enter into this relation toward the will of God. It may not be an easy thing to do, but it is a possible thing. Our wills may resist and be slow to surrender. Any child may prefer willfulness to obedience, but the way of willfulness is not the way of peace. The way of surrender is the way to unlimited pleasure and power.

PART SIX

THE FOURTH PETITION

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PART SIX

THE FOURTH PETITION

WITH the fourth petition of the Model Prayer a radical change is introduced into the course of thought and the objects of desire. The pronoun used up to this time has been the pronoun "thy"; "Hallowed be *thy* name, *thy* kingdom come, *thy* will be done." Now we come to the pronouns "us" and "our"; Give *us our* daily bread, Forgive *us our* trespasses, Lead *us* not into temptation but deliver *us* from evil.

I. *Relative Importance.* This petition is for the supply of our temporal needs. In that regard it stands alone. It seems that God would teach us in these petitions that our first thought ought to be of him and his glory. The uppermost desires of our heart ought to be the hallowing of his name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will. Then we ought to look to him for the supply of our temporal needs; but we ought to give twice as much thought to the forgiveness of our sins and freedom from spiritual evil. There ought to be five times as much solicitude that God be glorified and our souls be saved as we have for daily food. One petition for bread and five petitions for individual and universal spiritual blessedness; one petition for the body and five petitions for the soul; one petition for the stomach and five petitions for the spirit. These other petitions put together are five times as important as this petition at the very least.

We do not think that that number five represents any exact numerical proportion of importance, of course. Let us say, rather, that this petition for daily bread is preceded by a trinity of petitions representing a comparative infinity of importance, and is followed by another duality of petitions representing another comparative infinity of importance. That God's name be hallowed and his kingdom come and his will be done is of infinite importance to the entire universe in which we live. Whether we have any bread for to-day or we have not may be of some importance to us, but it is a matter of absolute insignificance, of comparatively infinite unimportance, to the great universe in which we live. If God's name were not hallowed and his kingdom were overthrown and his will were not done, chaos would come again and the whole universe would go hurtling headlong into destruction; but if we are without bread to eat to-day, the universe goes on just the same. There is no comparison in importance between this petition and the three which precede it.

While the petitions which follow it are no longer petitions for the Divine honor and the heavenly kingdom and the moral universe, but like it have to do with personal concerns and individual blessings, they again are of infinitely greater importance than it; for our eternal welfare depends upon the forgiveness of our sins and our triumph in temptation and our deliverance from evil. Our three meals for to-day are important, but the salvation of our souls covered by these last petitions is of infinitely greater importance to us. If we went out of this world hungry, it would be a misfortune; but if we went out of this world unsaved, it would be an immeasurable loss. The difference between a sufficiency for the satisfaction of the physical appetite of one day and the everlasting bliss of the heavenly salvation measures the difference in importance between this petition and those which follow it.

Augustine pointed out the distinction between these petitions as follows, "In the first three petitions we are asking things which, though having for us a beginning in time, will yet stand fast through eternity; the name of God will be hallowed, the kingdom will be established, and the will accomplished forever. But the other and later petitions relate to things transient: the daily bread will not be needed by them who feed on the beatific vision of God; nor the forgiveness of trespasses by them that are perfect; nor exemption from temptation, where there is nothing any more either within or without to tempt; nor deliverance from evil, where all evil will have ended."

Of the six petitions the last two may be called deprecations of evil: "We have sinned; do not condemn us, but forgive. There is evil on every hand; do not leave us in it, but deliver us from it." In a sense these are negative petitions. The first four are positive, and the fourth petition as the least important of them comes the last in that list. The last three petitions are for personal and individual benefits, and the last two are for spiritual gifts. "Howbeit," as Paul says, "that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."[1] Nature comes before grace. There must be life before we can ask for the more abundant life. There are three great necessities for the human race—bread for the body, peace of mind, purity of spirit; but the physical necessity is the most fundamental of these and therefore the prayer for daily bread is the first of the three personal petitions.

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[1] 1 Cor. 15. 46.

When Jesus put this prayer into this place, he meant to say to us that only he who began with pleading for God's honor and who ended with wrestling for present and eternal salvation *could* pray for daily bread in the right spirit and in a manner acceptable to God; and when he taught his disciples one petition for temporal blessings and five for higher and better things, he meant to suggest to us the incalculably greater importance of these.

In the last petition we prayed, "Thy will be done *on earth,* as it is done in heaven." That word "earth" brings the prayer down to mundane conditions and suggests our physical needs. The prayer for the stomach, the body, the cupboard, the workshop, and the field comes naturally next. The petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," marks the highest flight of our faith. The petition, "Forgive us our trespasses" is the deepest groan of our penitence. Between this highest height and this lowest depth of the prayer comes our prayer for bread. We remember that we are but dust and dependent for everything, and we pray to the Father, who never permits a sparrow to fall without his notice, that he will grant us daily providence first and daily forgiveness afterward.

Adolph Saphir said that this petition was the easiest of all and was offered with the greatest sincerity, and Henry Ward Beecher thought that this petition united more voices on earth than any other. There is a sense in which it may be called the prayer of the beasts as well as of men. The young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God. The heavenly Father feeds them all. It may seem a perfectly easy and natural thing for man to join the general chorus of the animal and vegetable kingdom and call upon God for daily food; but there is no promise that this petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," will be heard for any man if it is prayed all alone and if it is not properly subordinated to the higher interests of the soul.

That man who is hallowing God's name and is doing what he can for the spread of God's kingdom and the fulfillment of his will on earth as it is in heaven, and that man alone, has come to the place where he can pray acceptably, "Give us this day our daily bread." This is a prayer for disciples and only that disciple who has become a subject in God's kingdom and is hallowing his name and doing his will is authorized to pray this fourth petition. He must first honestly and earnestly pray his way through those preceding petitions and prove in his life the answer to them before he can have any assurance that this prayer will be heard and answered. He must do God's will before he can expect God to give him his daily bread.

Thomas Fuller declared that many people "played the witches on this prayer. Witches are reported (amongst other hellish observances, whereby they oblige themselves to Satan) to say the Lord's Prayer backward. Are there not many who, though they do not pronounce the syllables of the Lord's Prayer retrograde (their discretion will not suffer them to be betrayed to such a nonsense sin), yet they transpose it in effect, desiring their daily bread before God's kingdom come, preferring temporal benefits before heavenly blessings? Oh, if every one of this mark should be tried for a witch, how hard would it go with all of us!"

II. *Conditions.*—What is God's will concerning our daily bread? First of all, that we do all we can to earn it. It is not our bread until we have established some right of property in it by our own effort and industry. What did Paul write to the Thessalonians? "We hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, *working not at all.* . . . Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they *work,* and eat *their own* bread."[2] Their own bread! Bread which they had made their own by working for it. That was the divine order from the beginning. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."[3] There in Genesis we find that inscription set up over the beginning history of the race. In the middle of the Book we find the wise man reiterating that truth. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich; but he becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand."[4] That is true of bread as of everything else; the diligent hand has a rich supply while the slack hand has a poor one.

The psalmist suggested that the primal curse of labor was a blessing in disguise, for he said, "Thou shalt eat," not the fruit of every tree good for food which will fall into thy mouth without any exertion of thine own, but *"the labor of thine hands:* happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee."[5] Toward the close of the Book we find Paul assuring the Thessalonians that the primal law still held. "When we were with you, this we commanded you. If any would not work, neither should he eat."[6] "Our" bread is earned bread. We cannot pray, Give us "our" bread, until we have established some right to it by working for it.

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[2] 2 Thess. 3. 11-12.

[3] Gen. 3. 19.

[4] Prov. 10. 4.

He who told us to pray, "Give us this day our bread," earned his own bread for many years on hard labor. He worked for a living. He helped to support the family. He was a carpenter, and he was diligent in plying his trade through all his maturer years in Nazareth. He had daily bread with daily labor.

God does not give bread to lazy people or to idle people. God does not give bread to those who do not work. They may get it from other sources, but it does not come from him. The man who will not work when he has the opportunity may have inherited a fortune from his father and have concluded that he would live as a parasite on the commonwealth, but the daily bread and the cigars and the champagne which he consumes are not his but his father's. The apostle Paul would say that he was not fit to live if he would not do his share of work. At the other extreme of society there is the man who is supported by charitably disposed people who do not like to see anybody go hungry and who will feed the most disreputable and undeserving tramp who appears at their door; but they are not God's almoners in their undiscriminating and unwise gifts. God's will is that every man who can work shall earn his bread in the sweat of his brow, and that charity which runs counter to the divine will in this matter is simply soft-heartedness and not Christlikeness. Soft-heartedness and Christlikeness are two absolutely different things.

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[5] Psa. 128. 2.

[6] 2 Thess. 3. 10.

God provides berries and grain for the birds, but the birds search for these diligently, as diligently as need be to get them. The industry of the birds is one of the most amazing things in nature. They are in movement most of the time, always hustling for their food, making a perpetual quest for the good things which God has stored for them in the trees and the fields and the air. Their activity is almost beyond belief until you have observed it for yourself. When the Master told us to behold the birds of the heaven and to study their ways, he knew that while we were learn-ing a lesson of trust in the Father's providence we also would learn a lesson of uncommon diligence in providing for our needs.

God provides bread sufficient for all of his children, but they get it by sowing seed and harvesting grain and the after processes of milling and baking. It is according to God's will that we make it "our" bread by doing what we can to earn it. The obligation to labor rests upon all. If any are so rich that they are sure of having bread to the full without working for it, that does not exempt them from the necessity of labor. If they do not need to work for themselves, they do need to work for others. It is the great privilege of the man of wealth that he may work for the good of the community or of the nation or of the world and that he need charge nothing for his services. If he is a drone, he ought to die and get out of this workaday world. If he is a mere parasite, he ought to perish out of the sight of decent working people.

The extremes of society sometimes meet and the idle rich man is found to be just as worthless as the tramp; and the world may be better off when they are both buried. If they are giving their days to dissipation and their nights to iniquity, if they are squandering their money and their more precious moments and months of life, together they ought to be shut up in solitary confinement and starved into a willingness to work for their daily bread. Society would be better off and they would be better off themselves. It is good for men to work. Labor is a blessing.

The strong races are those which have had to wring their subsistence out of a hard and sterile soil. The strongest characters among men are not those who have been petted and provided for from their infancy, but those who have been pitted against privations and have had to struggle for a foothold on the ladder which led to the top. Labor strengthens both muscle and mind. Luxury weakens the will and enervates the intellect and leaves the muscles flabby and the morals mushy and the whole life morbid and unclean. Work sweetens the bread which is earned by it and gives health and happiness and a right to live and enjoy it. It is according to the will of God and his blessing rests upon it. So we pray, "Thy will be done," and then we pray, "Give us our daily bread," and we know that it is God's will that we work for that bread and that it is "our" bread only after we have done all that we can to earn it. How can a man ask God for bread which he is trying to get by fraud and trickery and sharp practice? He is praying to the wrong person. The old Roman merchants used to sprinkle themselves with water from a laurel leaf before the altar of Mercury and then pray to that complaisant deity to bless them in their cheating. The god of this world will hear and answer prayers like that. He will help men to get rich quickly by a little cleverness and a little fraud and a little dishonor; but—men cannot serve both God and Mammon. If they pray to God for daily bread, they must be content to earn their bread honestly and legitimately.

The merchant who makes use of any false measures and weights, who puts sand in his sugar or sage leaves in his tea, is not trusting in God for his daily bread, but to his own shrewdness and rascality. The man who prospers by forcing all competitors out of the field may become a great philanthropist afterward, but he always will know that he obtained his money unfairly, by the methods of the pirate and the freebooter, and that the wealth he enjoys is not his but rightfully belongs to those from whom he violently extorted it.

The man who is a promoter of worthless stocks or worthless lands may succeed in making large sales and may become rich while his countless victims become poor and the law may protect him in his property; but the bread which he eats does not belong to him, but to them. The product of injustice and oppression never is given in answer to this prayer. The employer who does not pay fair wages for work done does not eat his own bread, but the bread of another. The employee who soldiers on his job and does not earn his wage does not eat his own bread, but the bread of another. God never answers this prayer for those who are making their money out of the misery of others.

Those who grind the face of the poor by exorbitant rents for unsanitary tenements, those who rob the widows and the fatherless by taking advantage of their ignorance and innocence, those who make capital out of the weakness and the sin of their fellows, those who exploit womanhood in the white-slave traffic, those who exploit manhood in the liquor traffic, those who profit from the opium and the drug traffic, those who fish foul bread out of the sewers of human depravity and find it dripping with the blood of lost souls and poisoned with the curse of those they have damned, may wear diamonds on their hands and live in mansions and associate with millionaires, but they do not wear their own clothes or live in their own houses or ride in their own automobiles or flash their own jewels; all these things are the property of those they have robbed and exploited and depraved.

Their sparkling diamonds are the dropping tears of their victims. Their stimulating drinks are extracts from the life-blood of the oppressed. They sit at cannibal feasts, for their banquet meats are the product of the flesh and marrow, the life and strength of the laborers who die that they may live.

Their bread is not the gift of God but the wages of sin and death. They are not the servants of God; they are on the payroll of the devil. His pay breeds bad blood and brings moral leprosy. The bread which God gives is the staff of life and insures health and happiness both here and hereafter. Bread we beg is not our bread. Bread we steal is not our bread. Bread we get by wrongdoing is not our bread. If we get bread by hindering others from getting their bread, by shutting them off from their own share in the industry of the world and the fruits of it, by defrauding our fellows or by debauching them, this prayer ought to blister our lips when we pray it; for it is not God's blessing of bread but God's curse of perdition which comes to those who earn their living dishonestly.

There are two conditions upon which this prayer is to be offered—industry and honesty. We are to earn our bread and we are to earn it in methods which God may approve. There is a third condition which we must meet before God will hear and answer us in this petition. In the first place, we must work; in the second place, we must be honest in our work; and in the third place, we must pray for others as well as for ourselves. The Master did not tell his disciples to pray, "Give *me my* daily bread," but he told them that if they were his disciples, they must pray, "Give *us our* daily bread." We are told that in an old Socinian hymnal were the provincial petitions, "Give rain and sunshine to Greiz, Schleiz, and Lobbenstein; if others also wish them, let them pray themselves." There is nothing so exclusive or selfish in the Lord's Prayer. The Jews had a proverb, "He who prays for another is heard for himself," and Jesus recognizes the truth in that proverb when he prescribes prayer for the necessities of others as well as ourselves. Did not the old Scriptures say, "The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends"?[7] He had prosperity for himself when he prayed for them.

This is the great family prayer of the Christian brotherhood. It is the prayer of table companions for each other. Companions—*cum,* "together," and *panis,* "bread"—are those who eat their bread together, at the Father's table, as brothers in need. We pray for all our brothers in this petition, whether we like them or not, whether they think like us or not, whether they belong to our sect or not. If they are honest, working people, we pray that God may give them *all* their daily bread. While we pray this prayer we ignore all our surface antipathies and divisions and we get below these to our fundamental and universal needs. Our brothers may have injured us and they may despise us, but when they pray this prayer, they pray for us; and when we pray it, we pray for them. We are all needy alike, and we pray the one God and Father of us all to give us all our daily bread.

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[7] Job 42. 10.

There are those who feel the pinch of hunger in the home but who with honest pride would hide their poverty from all their neighbors and would shrink from asking any help from man. With what earnestness of petition do they turn to God the Father with the cry, "Give us this day our daily bread"! The widowed and the orphaned; the poor and the desolate pray this prayer with all sincerity. Can a rich man be equally sincere in offering this petition? To most of us our daily food comes as regularly as the daylight, and with many of us it comes with as little effort on our part. There are those whose barns are full of grain and who are constantly compelled to build greater granaries. They have a balance in the bank large enough to take care of all their needs for all the rest of their life. Is not this prayer superfluous on their lips? Is it not mere mockery for them to pray for daily bread? It would be if they prayed for themselves alone; but this is a social prayer and they perforce include all their brothers when they pray it.

The poor pray for the rich as well as for themselves. The rich pray for the poor as well as for themselves. No one prays this prayer honestly unless he prays it sympathetically for all his brethren. The man who is selfishly heaping up riches for himself while his brethren are starving and cold is a hypocrite in praying this prayer. The man who is accumulating needless luxuries while his brethren lack the barest necessities of decent life is a hypocrite in praying this prayer. The man who ignores the claims of the human brotherhood upon his service and love is a hypocrite when he prays this prayer. To pray it honestly the rich man must be generous and liberal and so help to answer his prayer. If he is an honest petitioner he must be a praying philanthropist.

This prayer means, first, industry; and, second, honesty; and, third, sympathy; and, fourth, generosity. In Matthew the verb in this petition is in the aorist tense—"give once for all."[8] In Luke the verb is in the present tense—"be giving; give continuously." Doctor Vaughan says, "Matthew touches the readiness, Luke the steadiness; Matthew the promptitude, Luke the patience of God's supply." The two evangelists differ slightly in another respect. Matthew says, "Give us this day," and Luke says, "Give us day by day."[9] According to Matthew, we ask for bread for the present day alone. According to Luke we ask for one day at a time, day after day.

It is a very humble prayer in either form, for we ask for the supply for a single day and are content with that. John Wesley said in his discourses on the Sermon on the Mount, "We are to take no thought for the morrow. For this very end has our wise Creator divided life into these little portions of time, so clearly separated from each other; that we might look on every day as a fresh gift from God, another life, which we may devote to his glory; and that every evening may be as the close of life, beyond which we are to see nothing but eternity."[10] So we pray for bread for the present day alone.

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[8] *δός ἡμῖν σήμερον.*

[9] *δίδου τὸ καθ ἡμέραν.*

To-morrow is in the hands of God. For many of our fellows it will never dawn, and we ourselves may be in the number of those who never will see it upon this earth. Yesterday is in the hands of God. Its record is made and we are done with it, except that the Judge will decide upon its worth. The present day is ours, and in Matthew's form this prayer would seem a good morning prayer for each new day, "Give us this day our daily bread." It hardly would be suitable to pray that prayer after the day was done and when we already had eaten all the bread we needed for that particular day. The form given by Luke, "Give us our bread day by day," might be suitable for an evening prayer or for any time in the day, and for that reason it might be preferred to the form in Matthew.

There is a reason for the limitation of time in this request. Bread soon grows stale. The supply needs to be renewed if the bread continue to be palatable and nourishing. The stomach is a day laborer and it goes on strike if its supplies are cut off for any considerable length of time. Our barns may store up grain and our bins may store up bread for long periods, but our bodies cannot. They are so constituted that the need for to-day must be supplied for to-day and to-morrow's need must be supplied for to-morrow when it comes. So we renew our prayer day by day as our food supply must be renewed day by day. Jesus told his disciples that they ought to live like the flowers of the field and the birds of the air, with no anxious thought for the morrow, doing diligently the work of each day and expecting the supply for the needs of each day, praying to the Father and trusting him for his unfailing providence and care.

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[10] Wesley, *Sermons*, vol. i, p. 241.

It was the lesson taught in the story of Elijah to whom the ravens (or the Arabians) brought bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening. It was the lesson of the manna given in the wilderness. Moses called the manna "the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." It came from heaven and was manifestly the gift of God. The people were commanded to gather it every morning and to take only a portion sufficient for each individual. The whole doctrine of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount as to Divine

Providence and human dependence is illustrated here. Our food is the gift of God. We are to ask for it and receive it day by day. We are neither to be anxious for the morrow nor to seek any superfluous supply, but we must be satisfied with the requirements for each day.

The humility of this prayer is apparent, first, in its limitation of time and, second, in the limitation of its demand. We do not pray for luxuries but only for necessities. In its moderation this petition reminds us of the prayer of Agur, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; let me eat the bread appointed unto me: lest I be full and deny thee and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of God in vain."[11] This is a prayer, not for superfluities, but simply for sufficiencies. We do not pray for cake but for bread. We do not pray for five-dollars-a-plate banquets, but for bread. We ask for enough and no more; enough to sustain but not to sicken us, enough for satisfaction but not enough for display, enough to keep us free from anxiety but not enough to make us feel independent of God's providence, enough for the preservation of health but not enough for the extravagant exhibition of wealth.

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[11] Prov. 30. 8.

We are reminded of the humility of the prayer of the rich man in Hades. He did not say: "Father Abraham, I have been used to luxuries all my life. You were a rich man and you know how it is. I sadly miss these things down here. Send that beggar Lazarus down with a good supply of good wine, that life here may be more endurable." No, he had learned to be more humble. Water was good enough for him, just a single drop of plain water to cool his tongue. His luxuries did not last. He was willing to pray for bare necessities now. He had learned his lesson too late. If he had been praying the Lord's Prayer all his life and had been living in the spirit of it, he probably would have lived longer and fared better in the end.

Life and health are worth more than any amount of wealth, and life and health are lost more often by surfeiting than by starving, more often by having more than bread than by having simply a sufficient supply of wholesome bread. This prayer represents the irreducible minimum of man's needs. It puts a bridle into our mouths in praying, that we should not be extravagant in our demands upon God's goodness. It puts a bridle upon our desires, that we should not labor for wealth which we cannot, as Lord Bacon suggested, "get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, leave contentedly."

If a man really is desiring to make twenty per cent or eighty per cent or two hundred per cent on his investment, he may as well quit praying this prayer. If in the bottom of his heart he is aching for a chance to make himself a millionaire, this prayer will not be adequate to meet his needs. With a head full of ambitions to make more money than he or his family ever can spend legitimately on their necessities, with a heart full of longing for many diamonds and many automobiles and several yachts and all the other paraphernalia of superfluous wealth, can he kneel in the morning and pray with any sincerity, "Give us this day a sufficiency of bread"? This prayer is a rebuke to all greed. It condemns all inordinate desire. Its spirit is incompatible with any longing for luxury or any craving for dainties or any indulgence in display. It is the prayer of the humble and contented, of the Christian disciple whose needs are few and whose desires are moderate and who is trustfully dependent upon the Father for everything.

It is the prayer of Christian humility, first, in its limitation of time; second, in the moderation of its demand; and, third. in the expression of absolute dependence upon God. In this petition we make daily recognition of the fact that God is the giver of every good and perfect gift and that we are dependent upon him for everything. We have read of that pastor in Edinburgh who asked the little children in his school, "Who gives you the bread which you have for dinner?" and almost without hesitation and in complete unison every voice answered, "Mother."

"Who gave it to your mother?"

"The baker."

"Who gave it to the baker?"

"The miller."

"Who gave it to the miller?"

"The farmer."

"Who gave it to the farmer?"

"The ground."

It was only when he asked, "Who gave it to the ground?" that he received the answer, "God." There are too many of the older children of the heavenly Father who are apt to forget that all their bread comes in the last analysis from God.

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour;
And back of the flour is the mill;
And back of the mill is the sheaf,
And the shower,
And the sun,
And the *Father's will.*"

God is the great Giver. He gave us life in the beginning and he gives us all the things which sustain life now. Adolph Saphir used to say that God was the only Giver in the universe, the only one who could give anything worth having. Satan can make promises, but he never can fulfill his word. He has baits to cover his hooks, but he never can deliver the goods he so alluringly dangles before the eye. The world cannot give any lasting good. Its gifts vanish into thin air when the light of eternity dawns upon them. The world gives and takes away again. Not as the world gives does God give to men. He is always on the giving hand. He bends over us from birth to death ready to shower rich gifts upon us all the time. He waits to hear us say, "Give"; and if we really mean it, he bestows his largess in full measure. He gives life, health, strength, talent, opportunity, grace, peace, hope—all we need for present and eternal beatitude.

As the father is the bread-winner and the food-giver for the family, the heavenly Father undertakes to provide for all the physical and the spiritual wants of men; and he feeds his people with what Jeremy Taylor called "extemporary provisions," that by needing always they may learn to pray to him. Ask the average man who gives regeneration, entire sanctification, and eternal life, and he will answer without any hesitation that these things come from God alone; but the same man sometimes is prone to think that his daily bread or his worldly prosperity is due to his own efforts and his own industry. Our Father is the God of providence as well as the God of grace.

So Jesus taught and so he believed and lived. Everything which came to him came from the hand of his Father. He gave thanks to the Father for the disciples who had believed on him. He gave thanks to the Father for the seven loaves and the two fishes. He gave thanks to the Father for miracle-working power. He looked to the Father for strength in temptation and for comfort in sorrow and for the supply of his every daily need. He desired his disciples to live in the same state of constant confidence in the Father's care and dependence upon the Father's providence.

Some men claim to be "self-made" and they worship only their maker. Moses warned such people that when they had eaten and were full, and had built goodly houses and had dwelt therein, and when their herds and their flocks had multiplied, and their silver and their gold had multiplied, and all that they had had multiplied, they must not forget the Lord their God, for it was he who gave them power to get wealth.[12]

Some seem to think that if they can earn their daily bread, they are free from all obligation to God for it; but he is the Giver of all good, whether it come by way of our own industry or not. That is clear enough in the case of the farmer. He may plow and harrow and sow, but after all his labor is done he must look to God for the sunshine and the shower which will bring the golden grain. He can do much, but he cannot do all. After he has done all he can do he needs to pray to God, humbly and earnestly, "Give us our daily bread." All the world depends upon the vegetable gardens and the fruit orchards and the pasture and the harvest fields for the food products of its daily supply.

We are told that every August the whole world is within two months of famine. All the granaries and the bins of the earth do not contain enough in any year to maintain the race for eight weeks after August, if there were no renewal of their supply from another harvest. We live from hand to mouth all the time, the richest of us as well as the poorest of us. We are all alike mendicants, dependent upon God's providence for everything. We need to pray for deliverance from famine and pestilence and all those dread powers which are beyond the control of our own utmost endeavor and industry.

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[12] Deut. 8. 12–18.

Some, again, have thought that those with an assured income—the rich and especially the very rich, the millionaires—would not need to pray this prayer, "Give us our *daily* bread." They seem to consider this prayer only for the use of the poor and the needy, not for the well-to-do. It might serve the purpose of David and his band of marauders when they were hungered and did eat of the shewbread, but it would not be of much service to Solomon in his palace in the midst of his magnificence. It does not seem to be a proper prayer for Abraham in the multitude of his flocks and herds, or for Job in the days of his unbroken prosperity, or for Joseph when he was master of the grain supply stored up for seven years.

They ask: "How can a man with a full cupboard and a balance in the bank need to pray for daily bread? How can a man whose barns are stored with the provision of bread for many days need to pray for bread for this day? Why does a man who has all the luxuries and the dainties of life at his disposal and demand need to pray for so common and so coarse a thing as bread?" The answer is easy.

If a man has plenty, from whom did the plenty come? Cannot He who gave it take it away again? Can he not scatter the proud in the imagination of their heart? Can he not put down princes from their thrones and exalt those of low degree? Does it not sometimes happen that he fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich empty away? How about the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution and the Chinese Revolution? Where are the French aristocrats and the Russian autocrats and the Manchu despots of yesterday?

A man can be made poor just as easily as he can be made rich. He may have barns filled with plenty and goods laid up for many years; and a single fire, a single war, a single unwise venture, a hurricane, a revolution, a stroke of paralysis may separate him and his wealth in a single day. When the Lord gave his disciples this prayer, he did not say that six of these petitions were for the poor and only five of them would be of any use to the rich. This fourth petition, like all the petitions, is for all the disciples of Christ. The richest man who ever lived is liable to the experience of Job, whose great possessions were swept away from him at a single stroke. Any evening he may be called to say with Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away." Every morning he ought to pray, "Give us, preserve to us if it be thy will, our daily bread." The life and health and strength and skill with which we earn our daily bread are all the gifts of God to men and they may be withdrawn at any time. There are two ways in which a man may be separated from his goods. They may be taken from him or he may be taken from them. There was a rich fool in the Lord's parable who was surprised by that second way. The blinding of our eyes, the crippling of our limbs, the snapping off of our thread of life may come at any moment, and as long as these things are true we ought to thank God for deliverance from these things as long as we live and to acknowledge day by day that the strength and skill with which we earn our daily bread and the sunshine and the shower with which he provides it and the peace and prosperity in which we enjoy it are all his good gifts; for the time never will come in which any of us can say, "My power and the might of my hand hath builded up these things," for it is God who giveth us power to do all we do.

"God gives us bread, when he gives the earth strength to bring forth bread. God gives us our bread when he gives seasonable weather to gather in our bread. God gives us our bread when he gives us peace and quiet to eat our bread. God gives us our bread when he gives us health and strength to earn our bread. And if we could reckon up all the ways of God's giving us our bread, we should find them to be more than the very grains of corn of the bread we eat."[13]

So wrote Sir Richard Baker and he seemed to think that corn bread was good enough for any man to receive in answer to this prayer. He thought this prayer ought to be prayed in all humility of heart and desire. He said: "As a ball, the harder it is stricken downward, the higher it rebounds upward, so the lower thy prayers take their rising from thy heart, the higher they ascend up into the ears of God. Stoop therefore, O my soul, and be sure to be humble, and so thou mayest be sure to command. Fail not to be lowly, and so thou shalt not fail to be exalted. Be content to be stricken the harder downward, and so thou shalt make the higher bound upward into heaven."[14] This is a prayer to be prayed with industry, honesty, sympathy, generosity, and in all humility; and, in the sixth place, with all the assurance of faith. It is the expression of our dependence and it is the expression of our confidence. We believe in a God who has a Father's solicitude for even the smallest of his children's needs; the living God who has made the heaven and the earth and who maintains them in their splendor and order, the all-glorious King of the universe who yet grants gracious audience to the most humble of his subjects who desires to approach his throne. He is the Guardian who never slumbers nor sleeps, the Ancient of Days whose strength never fails, the Gracious Giver whose treasure never is diminished, the Omnipotent and Omniscient One who knows all our need before we ask him and who hears every cry of faith from every praying child.

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[13] Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

A thousand years before him are as one day, and he sometimes answers in one day the prayers of a thousand years. He knows all the stars and calls them by their names, but he also knows and counts the tears which fall from the eyes of the widowed and the orphaned and the bereaved. The heavenly hosts offer up their thanksgiving before him, but he sees every sparrow which falls to the ground in the forest and he hears every bleat of the lamb out in the wild mountains, caught in the tempest or entangled in the thorns. He, the All-Mighty, has told us through his Son to pray to him for daily bread, and we know that he is our Father and that the Father who provides food for the sheep and the sparrows, the chickens and the dogs, will not fail to provide for us who are of so much more value than they. He has promised, and we believe that he will fulfill his promise, to supply all our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus, his Son and our Master and Lord.

III. *Bread.* It is time to ask what we ought to understand by this term "bread." We have consistently interpreted it so far in this discussion as the literal bread or food of each day. Shall we restrict our thought to this daily provision for our physical need, or shall we widen the meaning of the term so as to include other and higher needs as well? Erasmus thought that it was beneath the dignity of so heavenly a prayer as this to have any reference to physical food in it. Olshausen declared that the whole of the prayer comprised only spiritual petitions. Many interpreters have agreed that the wants of the body were unworthy of a place in the midst of a list of such magnificently spiritual supplications. They say that the Lord promised that if we sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness all our temporal needs would be added unto us, and he went on to say that the Gentiles sought after these things, but the Father knew that we had need of them, and the inference was that if we sought the Kingdom first we would not need to seek for these other things. We would not need to pray for them, for the Father would give them to us unsought, unasked, unprayed for.

They say that first things come first in this prayer, God's glory first, man's need second; and now that we come to man's need it is impossible that provision for the body should come before the forgiveness of sin and deliverance from evil. Men can get bread without asking God for it and without having God in all their thoughts and even by unrighteous means. Righteous men will pray for spiritual gifts and trust God for other things. They will not trouble the Master about such trifles as the bread needed for each day. They will ask only the bread of the soul, the Bread of Heaven.

We think this is a mistaken conclusion. Christianity always has set a high estimate upon the value of the body of man. Paul reminds us that it may be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus dwelt in a body through all his human life. He knew what it was to be hungry and starving after a forty days fast. Thereafter he pronounced a blessing upon his bread before breaking it with his disciples. It was only rye bread which he ate, not fine wheat bread such as most of us always have eaten, but he thanked God for it and recognized in it the good providence of the Father of all. He multiplied the loaves for the multitude in the wilderness. He had compassion upon them because they had nothing to eat. He could not send them away fasting to faint on the road. He was interested to supply men's physical needs as well as to reveal to them his spiritual truth.

Was that ever more apparent than in that resurrection appearance by the shore of Galilee? Peter had to be dealt with in very direct fashion on that occasion. There was a necessity for some searching of soul before Peter could be reinstated in his commission to feed the sheep and the lambs of the flock; but he and the other apostles had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They were tired and wet and discouraged. The ever-compassionate Jesus first gave them a most remarkable catch of fish to revive their drooping spirits, and then when they all had come to shore he gave them a breakfast.

What a marvelous fact that was, when we stop to think of it! This was the resurrected Lord, the Prince of Life, the Conqueror of

Death, and what had he been doing there in the early morning dawn? He had been gathering coals and building a fire and broiling some fish and baking some bread, so that when these tired disciples had arrived he might say to them, "Children, come and have your breakfast, come and break your fast"! He took care of their physical needs first and the spiritual instruction to Peter and the forgiving of his trespasses came later.

It was just like this Jesus to put a prayer for daily bread in the midst of this list of model supplications. It was not beneath his dignity, but altogether consistent with his character to do so. He did not believe that this life and the needs of this life were unworthy of the Father's care. Therefore we disagree with all those interpreters who would rule out all reference to literal bread in this petition. If we had to be confined to a single meaning for the word "bread" in this clause, we would prefer to believe that Jesus had in his thought the bread which was needed for the physical food of each day. That seems to us to be the primary signification of the term; but we doubt if it need be the only signification allowable here.

It may be that bread stands for all our temporal needs, anything and everything good for our bodily life. It was in this fashion that Luther explained it in his catechism as "everything necessary to the support and comfort of existence." Luther made out a list of twenty-two specifications under this general head and then added to this list the phrase "and the like" to show that his list was not exhaustive. He named first, "food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and land," two things belonging to our daily nourishment and two to our necessary apparel and two to our settled home and dwelling place. These are the most necessary things—food, clothes, and a place to live. Beginning with these, men need the means to maintain them; so Luther added, "cattle, cash, and household goods."

Luther was a thoroughgoing soul and it seemed to him that the best conditions for the cultivation of spiritual gifts could be found only in agreeable conditions in the home, so he added, "a pious wife, pious children, and pious servants." With these any home might be made a preparatory school for heaven. Then, looking outside the home, Luther added, "righteous magistrates and good government." Not content with these he adds further, "good weather, peace, health, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors." All of these and other things Luther included in this prayer for daily bread. Bishop Knox declares that this is a very "unspiritual catalogue of the conveniences of life,"[15] but the sturdy faith of the great reformer would not have been daunted in the least by any such comment by a bishop. He would have gone on praying for everything necessary to the support and the comfort of his existence whenever he uttered this petition and he would have thanked his Father in heaven that he always got what he asked and more.

In the *Table Talk* Luther says: "God always gives us more than we pray for; when we truly pray for a piece of bread, so God giveth a whole acre of land. When my wife was sick, I prayed to God that she might live, so he not only granted that request, but also therewith he hath given us a goodly farm at Zolfdorf, and hath blessed us with a fruitful year." The bishop might have thought that that table talk was childish and unspiritual in Luther; but Luther thought that it was altogether spiritual to trust his heavenly Father for every needed good.

Some interpreters who might not go quite so far as Luther in including the comforts as well as the necessities of life in this prayer are perfectly willing to agree that it includes both bread and all which we need to earn our bread —raiment, lodging, fuel, health, strength, and stable conditions of commerce and trade. We do not pray for bread to drop into our mouths, they say; but we pray for the opportunity to work and the ability to work and the skill to work to best advantage and then for the peaceful enjoyment of the result of our labors. This petition sanctions prayer for all temporal blessings which are needed to keep us at our best, so that we may be most efficient in the fulfilling of all our duties to God and man.

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[15] Knox, *Pastors and Teachers*, p. 86.

"The question whether this or that article of diet or comfort can be used under the head of 'daily bread,' can be answered only by answering the question—Do I work the better for it and pray the better for it?"[16] When we pray this prayer, then, we are asking for everything which will maintain our health and our efficiency of body and mind. We ought to be content with what is essential, but we ought not to be content with anything less than that in answer to this petition. If this is true, it follows that the petition will differ largely in its inclusiveness according to the individual who offers it. The day laborer will need physical strength and a degree of mental efficiency and his loaf of bread and his just wage in return for his manual labor, but the ruler of a nation will demand much more for his efficiency and for his reward.

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[16] Gore, *Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*, p. 58.

Some insist that bread for the body must by no means limit the scope of this petition. We need bread for the mind each day just as much as we need bread for the body. The body will starve without daily food, and the mind will become dwarfed and starve without daily knowledge and truth. As the body can be poisoned by unwholesome food the mind can be poisoned if it is fed upon falsehood. An efficient body with a deficient mind is of less value than a deficient body with an efficient mind. Therefore when we pray for our daily bread it is more important that we include bread for the mind than even bread for the body. Then we ought to pray also for the bread of the heart, which is love, and for the bread of the soul, which is inspiration. How refreshing to our spirits an hour with a good book or a conversation with a really great man may be! And we need this daily bread surely as much as any other.

There are those to whom a great picture is as a tonic, and there are those who are uplifted and strengthened by any great work of art. There are still more to whom the beauties of nature appeal and whose souls are exalted by mountain heights and ocean reaches and starry firmaments and waterfalls and flowers. God has given us these things to enjoy, and it is his will that our souls may feed upon them. He might have made a habitation for man without any of these beauties in it. He might have made a world without flowers and such a world might have been sufficient to maintain the physical existence of man. It has not been his will so to do, and we ought to rejoice in that fact and make the most of it.

Sir Richard Baker says that it seems most strange that "the flowers come out of the dirty earth, and yet how neat and clean! out of the unsavory earth, and yet how fresh and fragrant! out of the sour earth, and yet how mellifluous and sweet! out of the duskish earth, and yet how orient and vermilion! out of the unshapen earth, and yet in what dainty shapes, in what curious forms, in what enamelings and diapers of beauty!—as if the earth would show that for all her being cursed she hath something yet of paradise."[17] With what profusion has the heavenly Father scattered these flowers abroad over the face of the earth! It is his gift of beauty to his children everywhere. It is an indication of his will that every man should have satisfaction daily for his æsthetic tastes as well as for his physical and mental needs.

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[17] Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

Surely we cannot stop here. If the Father provides for these lower needs so lavishly, he will provide as certainly for the still higher spiritual needs of each day. Jesus called himself the Bread of Life, and Tertullian identified the bread of this petition with him.[18] There is a meat which perisheth and there is a meat which endures unto everlasting life. It is of the greatest importance that our souls are fed daily with this lasting and spiritual food. Sir Matthew Hale used to pray, "Above all, ever give me the Bread of Life, that whilst my body is fed, my soul may not be starved, either for the want of that everlasting bread, or for want of an appetite for it." The *Catechism* of the Churches of England and Ireland asks, "What desirest thou of God in this prayer?" and then answers, "I pray unto God that he will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies."

Shall we conclude, therefore, that Augustine was right when he said that the "bread" of this petition included the whole aliment of body and of spirit? Then, when we pray for daily bread may we include not only the literal bread for each day but also all things necessary for this life, such as clothing and shelter, water and air, and at the same time daily nourishment for mind and soul, and all the spiritual grace and help which we cannot earn and which we cannot do without and which we can have only in answer to our prayer? Here is this petition with spiritual petitions preceding it and with spiritual petitions following it, and while we may believe that its primary reference is to the bread for the physical need of each day, there seems to be no compelling reason for ruling out all reference to our spiritual needs as well as the physical.

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[18] *Panem spiritualiter intelligamus, Christus enim panis noster.*

If we include health and strength and efficiency for work and the daily nourishment of mind, soul, and spirit in the scope of this petition, then some of the implications of the prayer which we already have noticed ought to be recalled in view of this wider connotation. Hugh Latimer said: "Whosoever prayeth this prayer with a good faithful heart, as he ought to do, he prayeth for all plowmen and husbandmen, that God will prosper and increase their labor; for except he give the increase, all their labor and travail is lost. Therefore it is needful to pray for them, that God may send his benediction by their labor;

for without corn and such manner of sustenance we cannot live. And in that prayer we include all artificers; for by their labors God giveth us many commodities which we could not lack. We pray also for wholesome air. Item, we pray for seasonable weather. When we have too much rain, we pray for fair weather; again, when we lack rain, we pray that God will send rain. And in that prayer we pray for our cattle, that God will preserve them to our use from all diseases: for without cattle we cannot live; we cannot till the ground, nor have meat: therefore we include them in our prayer too. So you see that this prayer containeth innumerable things. For we pray for all such things as be expedient and needful for the preservation of this life."[19] This is a social prayer and as we ask God's blessing upon ourselves and our work we pray for all other workmen as well.

This is a prayer for those who are willing to work; and if spiritual blessings are included, we must be willing to work for these too. We cannot expect to thrive on others' prayers; we must pray too. We cannot grow intellectually if we allow others to do all the thinking; we must think too. We must not wait for others to furnish all the beauty of character and all the inspiration of life; we must supply our share.

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[19] Latimer, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

This is a moderate prayer, not for the superfluities, but for the necessities. If we include the spiritual life, we pray for all which is necessary for its maintenance and well-being; but we do not pray for spiritual stimulants and excitements. There are Christians who flock after sensational evangelists and who are very active in times of great religious revival, but who find the ordinary services of their own particular church organization too small an affair to engage their attention or demand their attendance. They are not praying for daily bread, but for daily stimulation. They are not praying for water; they demand whisky.

When we see the whole front of a building set apart for a religious organization covered with an advertisement with letters three feet long announcing that there are MIRACLES AND WONDERS in EVERY service, we know that the people worshiping there are not content to pray for daily bread, but must have daily ecstasies, trances, visions, miracles of tongues and miracles of healing, spiritual luxuries, spiritual dainties, sensations upon sensations. This prayer is a standing rebuke to those who are never satisfied with spiritual sustenance, but must have constant spiritual stimulants, and who are never content with daily bread, but only with spiritual condiments. This is a prayer for the normal rather than the abnormal in the Christian life. It is as religious a prayer as any other in this list of petitions. He who prays it in the proper spirit will be honest and industrious, unselfish and generous, contented and humble. He will be a model Christian, and only such can venture to use this model prayer; for, as we have seen, the answer to any one of these petitions will mean that he who prays it represents in himself the perfect disciple.

IV. *Daily.* This fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer seems simple enough in its English translation, "Give us this day our daily bread," but it has proved to be the most obscure of all the petitions and the most difficult of interpretation. There are widely differing opinions concerning it, and the scholars still are uncertain as to how it should be understood. We have reserved to the last the critical question involved in its elucidation. A word occurs here which has been "the torment of theologians and grammarians" for two thousand years—*"Crux non theologorum duntaxat, sed etiam grammaticorum."* The trouble with it is that no one knows what it means. It is one of the strangest facts connected with New Testament study that in this prayer, which has been in constant use among the disciples of Jesus from the beginning of church history to the present day, and among these words which are the most familiar words of the New Testament to all Christian believers, there should be one word whose meaning is unknown to any Christian of the present day as it has been unknown to all Christians of all the centuries possibly since the very first.

The commentaries and the Bible dictionaries and the lexicons and the learned discussions give us opinions galore, but we cannot be certain which one of them, or if any of them, has the truth. One of the greatest controversies in the Western Church of the twelfth century was waged between Bernard and Abelard over the sole issue of the meaning of this word. The matter was not settled then, as it had not been settled before and as it has not been settled since.

The puzzling word is the one adjective to be found in the model prayer, and one reason for the difficulty in determining its meaning is that it does not occur outside of this prayer as recorded by Matthew and Luke in any other passage in the ancient Greek literature, either sacred or profane. There are hundreds of books of this ancient literature still extant, but no one of the writers of them seems to have known or ever to have used this word. Origen knew Greek literature much better than we do to-day, but he declared that in his day, in the third century after Christ, he could not find the word either in the writings of the classical authors or in the speech of the common people.

He said, "It is never even mentioned in any of the Greek philosophical writers, nor used in the everyday language of the common people, but seems to have been coined by the evangelists."[20] It is a most important word in this petition and it probably is the most doubtful word in the New Testament. The reason for that fact is that it is not found in Classical or Hellenistic Greek literature, except in our two Gospels and in quotations from them. Fifty years ago there were hundreds of words which seemed to belong to New Testament Greek alone, and which, therefore, could not be paralleled elsewhere. More recent discoveries among the papyri of Egypt have cut the number down to about fifty. This word, *ἐπιούσιον*, remains one of these unparalleled words.

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[20] De Orat. 27.

Add to the fact of its nonoccurrence elsewhere the second fact that no one is sure of its etymology, and the problem of its meaning seems to become insoluble. Origen thought that the evangelists must have coined the word to represent some Aramaic expression used by Jesus, and, of course, they knew what meaning the word was intended to have; but the tradition of that meaning seems to have died with themselves and the church ever since has been praying the prayer without being sure what meaning this word was intended to convey. The word is ἐπιούσιον, and it may be derived either, as Origen preferred, from the preposition ἐπί and the noun οὐσῖα from the verb ε͂ιναι, to be, or, as Athanasius decided, from a preposition ἐπί and the feminine form ἰοῦσα of the participle ἰών from the verb ἴεναι," to go. The meaning will differ according to the derivation we prefer, and, of course, different meanings may be suggested under either of these etymologies. We will notice a few of these.

1. Jerome preferred the second of the two possible etymologies and in the Gospel according to Matthew he translated this petition in his Vulgate, *"Panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie,"* "Give us to-day our supersubstantial bread," the bread which

is above all substances, supernatural, spiritual, the bread from heaven. Wycliffe followed Jerome's example, "Give to us this dai our breed over othir substance." Over-other-substance is a literal translation of the Latin *super-substantialem.* About 1150, Pope Adrien, the Englishman, sent a text from Rome, with the reading,

> "That holy bread that lasteth ay,
> Thou send to ous this ilke day."

Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Athanasius, Augustine may differ as to the meaning of the word *ἐπιούσιον*, but they all agree that the prayer is for spiritual food, and in the last resort to be fed with Christ, the Living Bread. This is the favorite thought of all those modern writers who prefer to believe that all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are for spiritual needs. In the English translation of the Rheims version of the New Testament the petition reads still, "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread."

It seems to us that the primary reference in the petition is to physical rather than to spiritual need, and we are prejudiced therefore against any translation which recognizes only a spiritual meaning, and we cannot think that the little ones in the Christian Church of all the centuries could have repeated in simple faith a petition which had in it any such sesquipedalian terminology or any word of such doubtful metaphysical or philosophical signification. It would seem to be incongruous with the utter plainness and clearness of thought characteristic of this prayer throughout.

2. Others, following the same etymology, find in the compound the thought of futurity, that which ensues. Jerome says that the Gospel according to the Hebrews, supposed to date from the second century, had the interpretation, "belonging to to-morrow," that is, future or coming bread.

The word is *mahar,* the Hebrew מחר, which, Jerome says, "is in Latin *crastinum,* belonging to to-morrow." This is our earliest evidence on the subject, and this second-century evidence of the Aramaic vernacular is confirmed by the Coptic and Egyptian versions of the third century. There are other confirmations. Several times in the book of Acts we have the phrase *τῇ ἐπιούσῃ ἡμέρᾳ,* "the day following."[21] The marginal reading preferred in our own Revised Version for this petition is, "Give us this day our bread for the coming day."

Many good authorities consider this the proper meaning. Among these we find Suicer,

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[21] Acts 7. 26; 16. 11; 20. 15; 21. 18.

Scaliger, Bengel, Bretschneider, the older Lightfoot, Wetstein, Winer, Marshall, Meyer, and Grimm.

To our mind there is a degree of absurdity in praying that our bread always may be at least one day stale. Some people might consider it more healthy to eat stale bread than bread fresh from the oven, but it is doubtful if even they have this thought consciously in mind as they pray this prayer, and really mean, "Give us this day the bread which we will use on the morrow when the deleterious effects of its freshness have had time to disappear." Then, if this were the real meaning of the prayer, it would seem to be inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus here in the Sermon on the Mount, when he exhorts his disciples not to be anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for itself. It would be difficult to reconcile that exhortation with the command in the same discourse to pray for the morrow's bread.

3. The Peshito translated, "Give us to-day the bread of our need," our necessary bread. The Peshito is an ancient authority and the Syriac is closely allied to the Aramaic; and this translation has approved itself to Bishop Wordsworth and Dean Alford, and Lange and Mede and Schleusner and Stier. If this be

the meaning, why the unusual word? Why not the more usual ἐπιτήδειον of Jas. 2. 16 or the δὲον or αυτάρκη of the Septuagint of Prov. 30. 8?

4. The Old Latin Version translated the adjective by "quotidianum." Bishop Chase thinks that Jas. 2. 15, 16 and Tatian and Ephrem favor the rendering "Give us the bread of the day."[22] This meaning was adopted by Tyndale and came in this way into the King James and later English versions. We are told that this meaning of the Greek word was adopted in a kind of critical despair. Victorinus in the fourth century said that this translation represented the inability of the Latins to understand or express in the Latin tongue the Greek word.[23] Ambrose in the same century, said that "the Latins called this bread *quotidianum,* daily, which was called by the Greeks *advenientem,* coming, because the Greeks call the *coming* day τὴν ἐπιοῦσαν ἡμέραν."[24] Jerome gave this translation to the Greek in Luke, though not in Matthew, and so it came into the Vulgate and the later Roman Catholic versions. The Latin *quotidianum* and the English "daily" following upon it probably never

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[22] Chase, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church*, pp. 47–51.

[23] De Trin. c. Arium, i. 31.

[24] De Sacr. v. 4.

was and never was intended to be an equivalent for the Greek ἐπιούσιον, but whether it fairly represents the original or not, it has served the needs of Christian believers through the centuries and probably will be used to the end of time.

5. Origen was one of the best philologists of his day and was well acquainted with Greek literature, and he preferred derivation of this adjective from the verb "to be" and he thought it meant bread necessary for subsistence. The Ethiopic version reads, "our food of our every day." Chrysostom preferred the meaning, "convenient for our substance," convenient for our daily support. Theophylact understood the clause to mean, "bread sufficient for our substance or subsistence." Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Jerusalem favor Origen's derivation and interpret it to refer to our bodily wants. Origen probably is a safe guide here.

A lecturer in Athens says, "This word ἐπιούσιον is in general use among the Greeks of to-day. Many poor people complain that they cannot gain their ἐπιούσιον bread. 'Επιούσιος means 'whatever can sustain or maintain.' . . . It has nothing to do with 'daily.' The passage in the prayer may be thus translated, 'Give us this day our bread to sustain us.' " Possibly that is the best meaning for the petition, "Give us our sustaining bread," the bread on which we exist.

Agur prayed, "Feed me with the food which is needful for me" (Prov. 30. 8), and the phrase has been translated, "the food convenient for me," or "'the food of my allowance," or "the food of my portion." This is the meaning chosen by Delitzsch in his scholarly Hebrew version of the New Testament, which he made for the British and Foreign Bible Society. Jesus may have had that Old Testament prayer of King Agur in his thought when he suggested this petition to his disciples and it would be altogether congruous with all his other teaching if he had asked the disciples to pray that the heavenly Father would give them the bread necessary to maintain their existence and for only their fair portion of the same. That prayer would be moderate and humble and in every way proper in this middle place in the list of model petitions. Whatever the original thought may have been, we can pray this prayer in this meaning with all sincerity and with all satisfaction. "Give us this day our sustaining bread, and—."

It is the first time we have met that conjunction in this prayer. This "and" serves to mark a change in the prayer structure. The three beginning petitions had no such link between them. The three closing petitions are joined together. The three beginning petitions might be complete sentences in themselves. The three closing petitions form one sentence, the various clauses of which are united by the conjunctions "and" and "but."

Of this first "and" Sir Richard Baker says: "There is a word which though it be no part of the petition, yet because it brings the petition in, it is not itself to be left out, namely the conjunction "and," which in all the former petitions was never used, because, indeed, there was no use for it, for they went all singly by themselves, as chiefly referred to the honor of God, . . . but now that we are come to the petitions for the only use of men, now there is use for this conjunction: for all blessings in this world are tied, as it were, by links together, and are not good but in conjunction; and therefore this conjunction "and" is now here used, that as the first use of it that ever was, was to join the bodies themselves to heaven and earth together, so the use of it here is to join the blessings of heaven and earth together; for as an earth without a heaven would have made but a miserable world, so these earthly blessings without the heavenly will make but a miserable man.

"And therefore we have no sooner said, 'Give us our daily bread,' but it presently follows, 'and' forgive us our trespasses—as if it would infer that unless the spiritual blessings be added also, these temporal blessings will do us small good, or, rather, indeed, will do us more hurt than good. For what good did Dives' riches do him but to bear his charges in his journey to hell? What good did Haman's honor do him but to procure him a higher pair of gallows to be hanged upon? What good did Ahithophel's wisdom do him but to find out a cunning how in one act he might both do a murder and avenge it? But all this is helped by this conjunction 'and'; for if the spiritual blessings be added to the temporal, thy riches will prove a good unto thee as being a purse for charity, thy honor will prove a good unto thee as being a stage for humility, thy wisdom will prove a good unto thee as being a lantern for devotion and a shield against temptations."[25]

That is to say, this conjunction "and" is of great importance, admonishing us that we must not stop with the fourth petition, for it may have to do with only this temporal life. We must go on to the fifth petition, which has to do with the much more necessary half of our being—the life of the soul. These two petitions are bound together even as the body and the soul are bound together. As the body and the soul make one man these two petitions make one complete petition for the whole of man's need, "Give us daily bread for our bodies and forgive us the guilt of our souls." God's providence and God's grace must go together, or the providence may prove to be a curse. If our daily bread were given and our life were continued and our trespasses were accumulating day by day, unforgiven and more and more portentous in their mass, such a life would be a menace instead of a blessing.

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[25] Baker, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

We need a God who is a Giver and a Forgiver at the same time. We need forgiveness as surely as we need daily bread. We need forgiveness as often as we need daily bread, and in all probability we need forgiveness far more often than we need food. Three meals a day may satisfy our hunger. More than three times a day we may need to pray, "Forgive." That is the lesson of this conjunction "and." It may be that the sense of guilt should be as present with us as the sense of hunger; but in too many of us it lies dormant, while the bodily needs are clamant all the time.

Then this conjunction suggests to those who are conscious of their need for forgiveness that

God will give as richly of his grace as of his providence. He is a lavish Giver. He is an equally gracious Forgiver. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* Christian carries a heavy burden as far as to the cross. He was not fit for pilgrimage till that load had been lifted from his shoulders. No man can make much progress toward the Heavenly City and no man can make swift progress in the steep and narrow way as long as he is bent double under the weight of unforgiven sin. The runner must be set free from every weight, the pilgrim must carry no heavy load, the soldier must go unshackled into the conflict, or the race never will be won, the pilgrimage never will come to its desired end, and the battle will be a defeat. If we prayed, "Give us our daily bread" and stopped there, we might have life in answer, but if it were a sinful life it would be a miserable life; and it is a happy life, a peaceful life, a blessed life we crave. Our bodily needs are not our last or our greatest needs. When we have food and clothing and health and all the things necessary to our physical and mental efficiency, we may still be far from the attainment of happiness. We need more than these, and we must go on to pray for more than these. All of this is suggested by the beginning word of this petition, "and."

PART SEVEN

THE FIFTH PETITION

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THE FIFTH PETITION

I. *Debts.* "Give us this day our sustaining bread, and forgive us our debts," so the prayers read in the Gospel according to Matthew. In the Gospel according to Luke these petitions are, "Give us day by day our sustaining bread, and forgive us our sins." The evangelists probably considered those two words "debts" and "sins" as synonymous. Every sin is a debt, an unmet obligation, whether it be a sin of commission or a sin of omission, whether we say, "I have done that which I ought not to have done," or "I have not done that which I ought to have done." In either case we are unprofitable servants and we have failed to meet our obligation to God.

Our English tongue has put this truth into the very terms we use in discussing it. Our word "ought" comes from the Saxon form of the verb "to owe." A man who does always exactly as he ought owes no man anything in the way of service; but the man who does what he ought not owes somebody some reparation. He has come under obligation to make good his wrongdoing, either to his fellow men or to his God. Then our word "duty" comes from the word "due." The man who fails to do his duty is conscious that he is guilty of the sin of omission and possibly of the sin of commission as well; but if he does his whole duty, then nothing is due from him to anyone. The old Saxons recognized in the very structure of their language that what one ought to do, what was one's duty, was an obligation to some creditor, human or divine; and if one failed to do what he ought to do or did what he ought not to do, and if one failed to do his duty either actively or passively, either by sins of omission or commission, he came under obligation to some creditor either human or divine. Every sin was a debt, an unpaid or unmet obligation.

Is there a man, then, who can say that he has no debts to be forgiven? Will not every man, rather, agree with Maurice when he says: "Upon me lies a burden which I cannot shift upon any other human creature—the burden of duties unfulfilled, words unspoken or spoken violently and untruly, of holy relationships neglected, of days wasted forever, of evil thoughts once cherished, which are ever appearing now as fresh as when they were first admitted into the heart, of talents cast away, of affections in myself or in others trifled with, of light within turned to darkness. So speaks the conscience, so speaks, or has spoken, the conscience of each man. . . .

"Each one who has ever known what conscience is feels that it is upon his own very self that these obligations lie. He cannot cast them away as dreams of the night, they come back with fearful distinctness, the very act of which conscience testifies, every circumstance, look, tone, clearly recorded; it is no dream of the night. The voice, be it from heaven or hell, is a real one, which says: 'It is done and cannot be undone.' 'Thou art the man.' What signifies it that years have passed away, the act is gone, but thou art still the same, the act is gone into eternity, and there it will meet thee. These are the debts. Are they to ourselves? We may sometimes think so, but the thought is not comforting, for we see our utter inability to discharge them. Are they debts to our neighbors? Often we think so. We were bound to them by sacred ties which were forgotten, the friend repulsed because we did not understand him; the child petted or fondled into sin, or driven into it by roughness and what we called parental authority; those who looked to be raised and purified by us, degraded through our weak and groveling ways, and those who would have entered the kingdom of heaven hindered, because we cared not that they should be wiser and better than ourselves. But if our debts are to our brethren, they cannot discharge them."

There is only One who can discharge these debts, and it is to him we pray. We owe debts to *ourselves* as the stewards of God intrusted with the proper use of his gifts. We ought to take care of our bodies by forming temperate and chaste habits. We ought to take care of our minds by neglecting no opportunity to improve them. We ought to take care of our spirits and give them continuous culture. We owe something to our position in society, our citizenship in a democracy, our profession of discipleship to Jesus. *Noblesse oblige.* What man can say that he has fully met all these obligations? If he has not, how prone he is to make excuses! How frequently he tries to balance his good against his evil and show that there is something in his favor! How easy it is for us to forgive ourselves for all our shortcomings! But it is not ours to forgive them. Even if no others were involved in our delinquencies and the loss were all our own, we never can make it up, we never can discharge that debt even to ourselves.

Again, we are under obligation to our *neighbors,* to live righteously and to deal justly and to love mercy in all our relations to them. The employer must not oppress the laborer. The laborer must not defraud the employer. Business men ought to be honest in their transactions with each other. No man ought to incur debts without reasonable expectation of payment and no man ought to refuse payment of debts when he is able to pay them. Paul said, "Owe no man anything, except to love one another. . . . Love worketh no ill to its neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."[1] Every man is under obligation to meet this demand in behalf of his neighbor. He must do him no ill but, rather, good.

Where is the man who will say that he has met all his obligations at this point? Who can believe that he never has lost any opportunities for helping his brothers, for caring for the sick, for cheering up the discouraged, for warning the heedless, and for saving the lost? Who can affirm that he never has been lacking in love and never has omitted any duty toward his fellow men? Origen was a saint, and he said, "It is not possible so long as one lives not to be at every hour of day or night a debtor." We remember those who are dead and gone, to whom we might have been kinder, for whom we might have done more. We cannot forgive ourselves now as we think of those opportunities lost and those who were wronged are not here to forgive us. We have been impatient and we have been prejudiced; and we have come to see that we were mistaken in our judgments, but it is too late now for the injuries we did to be undone. These are debts which have passed beyond our power of reparation.

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[1] Rom. 13. 8, 10.

Then, we are indebted to *God.* We owe everything to him. All we have and are is his. Our debt to him is increasing daily as his gifts are renewed continually. We owe him gratitude; have we been as thankful as we ought to be for all his mercies to us? We owe him love; have we loved him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength? We owe him reverence; have we so feared his displeasure that we scrupulously and continuously have refrained from sin? We owe him service; have we presented our bodies to him a living sacrifice which is our reasonable service? Is God our Father? Then we owe him filial affection. Is he our heavenly Father? Then we owe him a life of heavenly aspiration and achievement. Is his name to be hallowed? Then we owe him holiness of conduct and character. Do we desire his kingdom to come? Then we owe him the devotion of loyal subjects. Is his will to be done? Then we owe him the homage of complete consecration. We ought to give him the first place in our hearts. We ought to put our whole lives at his disposal. We ought to bow in utter self-surrender to his blessed will.

Do we acknowledge him as the Giver of our daily bread? Then we owe him the thanksgiving of our lips and the obedience of our lives. Has he given us any particular talents? Then we owe him an adequate return for such favors. Our feet ought to run his errands. Our hands ought to do his work. Our eyes ought to be opened to see him wherever he chooses to manifest himself. Our ears ought to be quick to hear every word which comes from him. Our tongues ought continually to sing his praise. Who can say that he has discharged all his obligations to God? Who believes that he has rendered his God perfect obedience and honor and love? Who is sure that he has omitted no proof of his reverence and devotion? Every neglect as well as every transgression is a debt. Every failure to measuse up to the utmost requirement as well as every overt sinful act is a debt.

John Ruskin says: "Among people well

educated and happily circumstanced it may easily chance that long periods of their lives pass without any such conscious sin as could, on any discovery or memory of it, make them cry out in truth and in pain, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' But scarcely an hour of their happy days can pass without leaving, were their hearts open, some evidence written there that they have 'left undone the things that they ought to have done,' and giving them bitterer and heavier cause to cry, and cry again, forever, in the pure words of the Master's prayer, 'Forgive us our debts.' " We may sin against some individual and owe him all the reparation which is in our power. We may sin against society in general and need to devote a whole lifetime to make good the wrong. We may sin against our own souls and so weaken our spiritual natures at some point that we shall find ourselves obligated to ceaseless watchfulness lest at that point we be taken unaware and overcome. Yet every sin against ourselves or against our neighbor or against society is a sin against God. The ultimate creditor of all human souls is the Moral Lawgiver of the universe, the just and holy God.

David was right when he said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." David had sinned against his own soul and had lost the joy of God's approving grace. He had sinned against individuals, Bathsheba and Uriah, seducing the one and conniving at the death of the other. He had sinned against the church and the state, bringing disgrace upon the one and disorder into the other. Yet behind all these David saw the supreme Lawgiver, who had set men in society and who had ordained the laws by which nations and churches and individuals are rightfully to be ruled; and he was ready to cry with the prodigal, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee; against thee, and thee only, in the last analysis, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." Every sin is a sin against God. Every sin is a debt to God. Every one who has sinned needs to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

A new element enters into this prayer with the fifth petition. Thomas Manton, the Puritan, said, "We have done with the supplications of the prayer, and are come to the deprecations." All the preceding petitions might be offered by beings who were perfectly holy before they prayed, by the children of the Father who were perfectly devoted to his service and gratefully dependent upon his providence in everything; but this petition begins with the acknowledgment of guilt. The preceding petition might be uttered in the jubilant tones of full assurance and faith; this petition needs to be uttered in the subdued tones of repentance and solicitude for favor undeserved. The other petitions look God full in the face and ask him for his gracious gifts. This petition, like the publican, does not so much as lift its eyes to heaven as it sues not for bounty but mercy.

A cloud hangs over the remainder of this prayer. In the fourth petition we were beggars, but in the fifth and sixth petitions we are sinners, praying for forgiveness of sin and deliverance from the guilt of sin. These are the prayers of a fallen race. Yet all these petitions can be prayed in the full assurance of faith, for even sins can be forgiven! Nature does not forgive. The health lost in the dissipation of youth is not restored in later years. The riches squandered in riotous living are not recalled by any repentance or regret. Society usually does not forgive. The criminal is put into stripes and thereafter he is branded for all his life. *God forgives!* It is the marvel of his grace.

If sin is a debt, he promises that it shall be wiped out. If it is a handwriting against us, it will be nailed to the cross. If it is scarlet in hue and like a crimson dye, he has promised that we shall be made white as snow or wool. If it is a prison cell, he will send his angel to open the door and set the captive free. If it is ever before us and we never can be rid of the horror of its presence and the dread of its power, he will take it away and cast it into the depths of the sea, he will remove it as far as the east is from the west, he will separate us from it by celestial diameters of transformed character and life. Is it like an evil spirit filling us with unholy passions and desires? He will bid the spirit depart and it will flee at the first word of his command. Is it like a cloud of darkness in which we live and move and have our being? He will flood our whole world with light and in his light we shall see light for evermore.

Is it like a creeping paralysis, deadening all our limbs? He will straighten the bowed back and loosen the stammering tongue and give new life to the fumbling fingers and the stumbling feet. Is it like a leprosy, incurable by any human power and increasing with every passing hour? God can make the leper clean. Is it the death of all good impulses and righteous desires? God, who opens the eyes of the blind and cures the palsy and the leprosy and delivers the demoniac, can give life to the dead! He is the Miracle-Worker to whom all things are possible which to men would be impossible, and it is the miracle of miracles that sins should be forgiven. Paul was the chief of sinners, and yet he was forgiven. Peter denied the Master in his hour of greatest need, and yet he was forgiven. The Jews nailed Jesus to the cross, and yet they were forgiven. Jesus did not hesitate to say, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme," and the only exception he made to the sweeping universality of that statement was in the case of those who would not be forgiven.[2] Therefore we can pray this prayer, not only with repentance but also in faith; for our sins can be and will be forgiven if we meet the conditions which make forgiveness possible.

It may be well to remind ourselves at this point that God's forgiveness is not remission of sin's penalty. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, forgiven or unforgiven. Sin sometimes brings physical disabilities. It often means a perverted judgment and a clouded mind. It always means a weakened will and more feeble character. God is our

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[2] Mark 3. 28.

Father and he deals with us as children who must be punished for wrongdoing. He punishes us in love. He chastens us for our good. He scourgeth every forgiven son. He forgives, but he does not let us off all punishment. Forgiveness is of his grace. Penalty is of his providence and his inevitable law. The guilt may be forgiven; the consequences abide. Wasted health is not restored by forgiveness. Wasted wealth is not regained by repentance. Yesterday's sins are beyond our reach and their results are unavoidable.

II. *Dangerous.* Each of the petitions in this prayer has been given a distinguishing title suggested by the nature of the petition itself. The first has been called the holiest of all, "Hallowed be thy name." The second has been called the most blessed of all, "Thy kingdom come," for the coming of the Kingdom is the greatest blessing we ever will know either in this world or in the world to come. The third has been called the hardest to pray, "Thy will be done," for our will always is ready to assert itself in opposition to any other. The fourth has been called the easiest to pray of the whole list of petitions, "Give us this day our daily bread," for the most selfish of men and even the beasts might pray a prayer like that. Then this petition, the fifth in the list, has been called the most dangerous of all, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

Why should this be called the most dangerous petition? Because of that condition which is appended to the prayer. We ask God to forgive us as we forgive others. We may be praying a curse upon our heads instead of a blessing. God has heard us as we again and again have prayed this prayer before him and he will answer us even according to our petition. Some time we are to stand before his judgment throne, and then we shall need to ask him for free and full forgiveness for all the past. If we have fully forgiven those who have trespassed against us, forgiven them without mental or any other reservation, God has bound himself as the one who hears and answers prayer to be in like manner gracious unto us; but if we have been hard and unloving in the treatment of our moral debtors, if we have not been able to forget their wrongdoing, and much less to forgive it, but have nourished in our souls a secret and quiet hatred against them, then our own prayer so often uttered has cut off from us all promise of a gracious reception at God's judgment throne. Whatever our fate may be in the last day, we shall see in it only the answer to our own oft-repeated petition, "Forgive us our debts, *as we forgive* our debtors." It is a dangerous petition because in it we may be praying away all hope of our own forgiveness and our eternal salvation!

The Master seemed to think that this petition was of special importance, or at least that it needed special emphasis laid upon it. As soon as he had finished the list of petitions he suggested for the Model Prayer, he dropped the others, but he returned to this one. He made of this petition a repetition by way of emphatic commentary upon it. In the prayer as given in the Sermon on the Mount we read, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. . . . For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."[3] The Master's commentary is so concise and his declaration is so clear that we cannot mistake its meaning. Jesus must have made this additional comment because he deemed it necessary, because he would not have us make any mistake in this matter; for this might be a very dangerous petition and in praying it men might be praying upon their own heads not a blessing but a curse.

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[3] Matt. 6. 12-15.

The principle laid down in this petition and in the comment of Jesus upon it is that God will deal with men as they deal with others. As Jesus says a little later in the great sermon, the invariable rule will be, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[4] James in his epistle puts the same principle thus, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shown no mercy."[5] This petition, then, will constitute itself our Judge, acquitting those who pray it with a merciful and forgiving spirit and condemning all who pray it while cherishing any hatred or implacability against a brother. It would be better for a man not to pray this prayer unless he can pray it in the spirit of charity to all his fellow men. He will be judged by the spirit which he cherishes in his heart, and Jesus said that the prayer would be answered according to that spirit. The proper spirit will bring a gracious answer. An unforgiving spirit will bring a certain curse. Chrysostom said, "God appoints thee thyself the master of the verdict. The judgment thou passest upon thyself he will pass upon thee."

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[4] Matt. 7. 2.

[5] James 2. 13.

In the light of that fact Sir Richard Baker asks: "Do we therefore well consider what we do when we say this petition? For do we not make these words 'Forgive us our trespasses,' to stand at the mercy of the words following? For if we be merciful to others, they are no no doubt an excellent prayer; but if we do not forgive others, what are they, then, but a very curse? For what greater curse, or what plainer terms to express a curse, than to pray to God to forgive us as we forgive others, and in the meantime to mean nothing less than forgiving of others? And so we do worse to ourselves than David prayed to be done to his enemies, Let their prayer be turned into sin, Psa. 109. 7. For we have little else left us of goodness, but our prayers to be good, and shall we turn them also into sin, and that which is the worst of sin, into a curse?"[6]

Martin Luther puts the truth in his usual blunt fashion: "This prayer will in the sight of God be a sin; for when thou sayest, 'I will not forgive,' and standest before God with thy precious paternoster, and mumblest with thy mouth, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,' what is that but saying: 'O God, I am a debtor to thee, and there is one who is the same to myself. Now, I will not forgive him, and so do not thou forgive me. I will not obey thy command, although thou hast told me to forgive; I will, rather, renounce thee and thy heaven, and all, and go to the devil for evermore." This, then, can be what Augustine called "a terrible petition." As some men pray it, it is not a prayer for forgiveness, but for vengeance to fall upon their own heads.

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[6] Baker, *op. cit.*, pp. 170–171.

Does any man say: "I never can forgive that conduct in my neighbor. It was too atrocious. The injury was irreparable. He was like a mad-dog or a lunatic. The only way to deal with an individual like him is to exact an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. That may bring him to his senses. Nothing else will"? If a man feels like that toward any brother man anywhere on God's earth, it would be well for him never to repeat this prayer. It is pretty serious business for him if he does. He is asking God never to forgive him his debts to God, but to exact an equivalent in vengeance for each one.

Here is another man who says: "I have no desire to take any vengeance on my brother. I shall let him alone if he keeps out of my way; but I never shall forget how mean he has been and I never shall forgive him." Let him never offer this petition, for if he does, he asks God to cherish the remembrance of all his iniquities and to mingle wrath and bitterness with every thought of him!

Did we say that a new element had entered into this prayer with the fifth petition, and that while the preceding petitions might have been offered by the perfectly innocent or the wholly upright, this one could be offered only by those who were conscious of their sins? Did we say that this was a prayer of penitence to be offered with heads and hearts bowed in contrition? We said also that this prayer could be offered in the full assurance of faith. Have we said now that this may be a dangerous petition, a terrible petition to those who pray it in an unforgiving spirit? We ought to say next that this is a most encouraging petition to those who are ready to forgive those who have trespassed against them.

III. *Encouraging.* It encourages us by reminding us that men can forgive generously and freely. We have known men, greatly wronged, who did it. If they were able to do it, we may be able to do it; and if men are able to do it, how much more certain we are that God will be able to do it. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things unto them who ask him?"[7] We always can argue from any goodness in ourselves to the infinitely greater goodness of God in the same respect. Then the very fact that we forgive encourages us to approach the Father in this petition with all assurance.

The church Fathers were very bold in their assertions in this matter. Peter Chrysologus said: "The power of obtaining pardon is in thine own hands; on thyself, O man, depends the forgiveness of God; thou art made to thyself the author of divine remission."[8] There is a degree of truth, although not the whole truth, in that statement. Gregory of Nyssa comments, "We are, as it were, asking God to imitate us: 'I have forgiven; do thou forgive. Imitate the kindness of thy servant, O Lord.' So let him who approaches his Benefactor be a benefactor; let him who approaches him who is good, just, forgiving, kind, be himself good, just, forgiving, kind."[9] There is a measure of truth here, though it would be partial and shallow enough if left to stand alone. Yet it suggests that if we are sure of our own spirit of forgiveness that consciousness gives us all assurance in asking for our own forgiveness.

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[7] Matt. 6. 11.

[8] De orat. Dom., serm. iv.

[9] De orat. iii. 753 A.

William Tyndale, in his sturdy Protestantism, rejoiced in this conclusion and wrote, "If thou wilt enter into the covenant of thy Lord God, and forgive thy brother; then whatsoever thou hast committed against God, if thou repent and ask him forgiveness, thou art sure that thou art so absolved by these words that none in heaven or earth can bind thee; no, though our most holy father curse thee as black as coals, seven foot under the earth and seven foot above, and cast all his lightning upon thee, to turn thee to powder." Anthony Farindon called our forgiveness of others our quit-rent to God. He said, "Your quit-rent, your acknowledgment of God's great mercy, is your mercy to others. Pay it down; or you have made a forfeiture of all."[10] That is the encouragement in presenting this petition, that when we have paid our quit-rent down we have our receipt in full for all our inheritance in God's grace.

IV. *Us, Our, As.* There are some small words in this fifth petition which deserve our notice. We pray, "Forgive *us,*" and that plural pronoun reminds us that this is no merely personal or individual or selfish prayer, but that this petition, like all the other petitions, includes in its scope all the children of the heavenly Father, all our brothers by blood, by race, and by faith. Some of them are our enemies, but we pray for them. Some of them have injured us, cheated us, slandered us, but we pray for them. Some of them have sinned against us with a high hand and they are greatly in our debt, but we pray for them as we pray for ourselves, "Father, forgive *us.*" The very fact that we do that honestly means that we ourselves have forgiven them. We bring all our brethren with us to the Father's throne of grace, and we pray, "Forgive *us.*"

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[10] Farindon, *Works*, vol. i, serm. ix.

The publicans and harlots, the Pharisees and the Herodians, the opportunists and the timeservers, the thieves and murderers, the profligate and abandoned, the drunkards and drug fiends, the grafters and the autocrats, the cheats and the dead-beats, all have the same nature with ourselves, are all our brothers and sisters in the human race, and we take our stand in all humility by their side while we pray: "Father, forgive us all. We are all in thy debt, some more and some less; but we all need to be forgiven." That word "us" takes in all the races of men the wide world around.

We pray, "Forgive us *our* debts," and when we use that word "our" we acknowledge that the debt of any one is in a measure the debt of all. We are all our brothers' keepers. We have a corporate responsibility. The sins of our social order are in large degree due to corporate failures. The church is not what it ought to be. It is weakened by divisions and dissensions. It is lukewarm in service to the community and the world. It is too worldly and too self-satisfied. If we had been all we ought to have been things would have been better in the church. If we had borne our witness faithfully and if we had furnished perfect examples of conduct in church relationships, there would have been improvement along all these lines. We are partly to blame. Therefore we pray, "Forgive us *our* debts."

The social order is not what it ought to be. Commercial relations are not always righteous relations. In a competitive system might is right and there is no law of the land to protect the weak from the aggression of the strong. There is no distinction drawn by the courts between fair and unfair competition. If a strong concern can oppress or repress or suppress a rival by any ruthlessness within the legal limits no one objects to-day—no one except those idealists who insist upon righteousness in everything. The peoples have false ideals. They worship wealth more than they respect character. They believe in getting on, by hook or by crook; and they would rather succeed than to be either poor in spirit or pure in heart. They have more confidence in material than in spiritual methods and therefore they prefer war to arbitration and they set out to spread democracy over the world by force of arms rather than by force of argument.

The more highly civilized nations exploit the natives of the less developed lands. There is oppression of the poor. There is misery everywhere, among the very rich and in the middle classes as well as in the alleys and the slums; for there is sin everywhere and social iniquities bring sure retribution upon all classes alike. The fever and pestilence bred in the unsanitary tenements invade the mansions of the millionaires. The vice of the segregated district sends its virus of disease into every section of the city. We do not live to ourselves alone. We are bound together in modern society, and in the responsibility for the moral disorders of the community we all have a share. If we had protested fearlessly and faithfully, things would have been better than they are. If all the disciples of Jesus always had been what they ought to be, things never would have become as they are. When all the disciples of Jesus really are what they profess to be, these injustices and iniquities will cease upon the earth which they will claim for the kingdom of God. Until that day has come the disciples of Jesus have fallen short of their obligations to the God who redeemed them and sent them forth to redeem the race. Until that day has come we pray with all contrition and in all humility, "Forgive us *our* debts, O Lord."

There is a still closer sense in which we may appropriate this pronoun "our" to ourselves. It was Augustine who said, "Nothing is so much our own as our sins." Others have a right in our Father. Others may claim a share in our bread. Our bodies, created by God, belong to him. Our minds and spirits have his image and superscription upon them. Our voluntary sins have no image and superscription upon them except our own. Men always have been prone to attempt to transfer the responsibility for them to their heredity or their environment or their temptations or their destiny or their devil, but all of these equally fail before the fact that they were drawn away by their own lust and enticed before they gave the consent of their own will and fell. Every man must bear his own burden of sin. His obligations to God and to his fellow men are his own and they can be shifted to no one else. Therefore we pray in all contrition and in all humility, "Forgive us *our* debts, O God. They belong to us and to no other. They are our obligations and we never can meet them of ourselves. Forgive them all, O God."

We pray, "Forgive us our debts, *as* we also have forgiven our debtors." That little word "as" links the third and the fifth petitions together. In the first section of the model prayer we asked that God's will might be done upon the earth *as* it is done in heaven. In the second section of the prayer we ask that we may be forgiven *as* we have forgiven. In both sections a parallelism between heaven and earth is instituted by this little conjunction. In the third petition it stood for a measure of equivalence. As far as was possible the obedience of earth was to imitate, reproduce, and equal the obedience of heaven. Can that be the meaning of the conjunction here? Do we ask God to forgive us in the same measure in which we forgive? Do we ask that his forgiveness may be equal to ours?

If that were all we could expect in answer to this petition, we surely would be lost. We need a divine, an infinite, an unlimited forgiveness. No human forgiveness can furnish a measure of our necessity before God. Jesus did not tell us to pray, "Forgive us our debts *as much as* we forgive others." We may have the forgiving spirit, but we would not venture to make our meager capacity to forgive the measure of the forgiveness of the Infinite One. He is greater than we. His thoughts are not as our thoughts.

> "The love of God is broader
> Than the measure of man's mind,
> And the heart of the Eternal
> Is most wonderfully kind."

There is our hope, not in any proportion set up between our forgiveness and the forgiveness for which we pray. When we pray, "Forgive us as we forgive," we do not mean "as much as we forgive."

Do we mean, "because we forgive"? In the Gospel according to Luke this petition reads, "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us."[11] Forgive, *for* we forgive. Forgive us *because* we forgive others. Is that what Luke means? Is our forgiving made the *ground* of our forgiveness by God? That would be salvation by merit. That would be salvation on the ground of our own works. We do not ask God to be good to us because we are good to others. That would be mere legality, and we belong to the dispensation of grace. The word "as" does not mean

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[11] Luke 11. 4.

"because," "for the reason that," or "on the ground that." It does not mean "as much as." Then what does it mean?

It is important for us to know. If we pray this prayer aright, we must pray it intelligently, and we must know what we mean by each word in it. We have confessed our ignorance as to the original meaning of one important word in the preceding petition, but we decided upon a meaning for ourselves in the use of it. What do we mean when we say, "Forgive us *as* we have forgiven"? We mean, "in like manner as," not "in like measure as," and not "for the reason that," but simply asserting that we ourselves have the forgiving spirit we claim that we are in a position and condition which makes us capable of receiving God's forgiveness.

V. *Forgiveness.* There is nothing arbitrary about the bestowal of God's grace upon men. The forgiveness of God waits ever upon the willingness of man to receive it. It stands ready to enter the heart as soon as the door is open to it. The heart which is closed against its brother man is closed against God at the same time. The heart which is opened to its fellow man in forgiveness and sympathy and love is opened to God at the same time. It is one and the same door which admits or shuts out both God and man. It is true that the man who does not forgive his neighbor will not receive forgiveness from God, but that is true simply because he *cannot* receive God's forgiveness. Only when he has the spirit which forgives does he have the spirit which can be forgiven.

We cannot love God and hate our brother. John says, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."[12] We cannot have forgiveness from God while we cherish a spirit of resentment, retaliation, and revenge against our brother. It is one of the moral impossibilities. It is just as impossible for us to forgive our brother while we cherish a spirit of resentment, retaliation, and revenge against him. The two things are contrary to each other. They are mutually exclusive. They cannot coexist in the same heart at the same time.

We sometimes are reminded that forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance, and that God himself does not forgive until a sinner repents, and that Jesus said, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and *if he repent,* forgive him";[13] and then we are told that God requires no more at our hands than he does of himself, and that we must not forgive the dishonest and unjust and slanderous and evil man who continues his bad conduct and gives us to understand that he neither needs nor desires our forgiveness. That is all true, and some people seem to get a great deal of comfort out of the thought that there is a limit set to our forgiveness and that we do not need to forgive everybody, for there are some who have put themselves beyond the pale of forgiveness and who must remain there until they have made acknowledgment of their guilt and do heartily repent of their misdeeds. However, there is a question as to how much comfort there ought to be in this fact, when closely considered.

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[12] 1 John 4. 20.

[13] Luke 17. 3.

Those who find comfort in it are apt to conclude that it is a concession to human weakness and that those whom we cannot forgive are those against whom we may continue to cherish something at least of the spirit of resentment, retaliation, and revenge. That does not follow in the least. It is true that God's forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance and that he does not require us to forgive those whom he himself would not and cannot forgive; and it is all right for us to make God's forgiveness the example of our own. Did not Jesus say, "Be ye therefore merciful, *as* your

Father also is merciful."[14] There is the New Testament standard for our conduct, "Be ye therefore perfect *even as* your Father who is in heaven is perfect."[15] Does he cherish the slightest spirit of resentment, retaliation, and revenge against anyone? Does he not stand ready to forgive every sinner who acknowledges his guilt and repents of his sin? Does not his forgiveness wait upon the first indication of the possibility of its bestowal upon anyone?

The father did not receive the prodigal until his return. He could not give him all the comforts and blessings of the father's presence and home as long as the prodigal was in the far land; but he was waiting patiently and prayerfully for the son's return. He was ready to forgive the wanderer as soon as he saw him. He cherished no slightest spirit of resentment, retaliation, and revenge against him. He loved him all the time. His forgiveness was waiting for him at every moment. He needed only the chance for its immediate manifestation. That is the standard of conduct set before us.

We are to forgive only when we *can* forgive; but we are to be *ready* to forgive all the time.

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[14] Luke 6. 36.

[15] Matt. 5. 48.

We are not ready to forgive if we cherish any resentment, or desire for retaliation or spirit of revenge. We must love our enemies before we can forgive them. We must love our enemies all the time and therefore be ready to forgive them at any time. We may not be able to forgive, but we ought always to desire to forgive. The will to forgive and the intention to forgive ought to be with us always, even as we are assured that they always are with the Father in heaven. That is the standard. There must be *no limit* to our willingness to forgive!

Peter once asked the Master that question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"[16] It was a mean and calculating spirit which would be patient up to a certain point if only passion might be allowed the right of way after that. Peter probably thought that seven was the perfect number and if any man forgave his offending brother seven times, that was enough to prove him a perfect man; no one's goodness ought to be expected to go any further than that. What did Jesus answer? "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but Until seventy times seven," and that did not mean four hundred and ninety times. That meant, "Keep no count; lose all thought of counting; let your forgiveness be *without measure* even as God's forgiveness is without measure toward you. The question is not how little you may forgive. The only question is how much you may love. Love your enemies all the time, just as much as you can; and your forgiveness will be limitless, exhaustless, always ready for manifestation when any opportunity may arise." That is the New Testament standard. That is the standard of the Sermon on the Mount.

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[16] Matt. 18. 21.

The Sermon on the Mount has been said to contain the whole constitution of the kingdom of God upon earth; and if that be true, it would seem to follow that Jesus considered this doctrine of forgiveness as one of the most important features of the Kingdom he had come to proclaim. Six times in this sermon he mentions it. The whole discourse is filled with it. By his emphasis and his frequency of mention, he makes it appear to be of the very essence of his gospel. He said, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."[17] Reconciliation would be more religious than any contribution at the altar would be.

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[17] Matt. 5. 23, 24.

A little later in the Sermon Jesus replaced the Old Testament law of retaliation with his own new law of love, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not one who doeth thee evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."[18] By all means be reconciled to thy brother, if thou hast wronged him; and by all means be at peace with thy brother, even if he hath wronged thee. Again Jesus had said, "I say unto you, Love your enemies, . . . and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven."[19] Then he gave the model prayer with this petition in it, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and then he immediately added, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."[20]

Still later in the sermon he returns to the subject, and says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"[21] Then, toward the sermon's close, Jesus summed it all up in what we call the Golden Rule, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."[22] There is scarcely any other truth so emphasized in the sermon.

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[18] Matt. 5. 38, 39.

[19] Matt. 5. 44, 45.

[20] Matt. 6. 14, 15.

This fifth petition is in line with the teaching of all these passages in the sermon with much of their context besides, and the lesson of them all is that it is a matter of much more importance than some of us have been accustomed to think that we sustain not only righteous but loving relations to our fellow men. We must forgive them, we must be reconciled to them, we must be at peace with them, we must love them even as the Father in heaven forgives them and loves them.

Why should we forgive our debtors? First, because so much has been forgiven us. The Lord has furnished us with the best possible presentation of the case at this point. He spoke to his disciples in a parable one day about a king who would hold a reckoning with his servants; and one was brought to him who was his debtor to the extent of ten thousand talents—an enormous sum—an obligation which no man ever could hope to meet in payment.

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[21] Matt. 7. 1-3.

[22] Matt. 7. 12.

After the death of Josiah the king of Egypt laid a tribute upon the land of Palestine of only one talent of gold and a hundred talents of silver.[23] The king of Assyria asked of Hezekiah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.[24] These were levies upon a whole land, and we read that Hezekiah had to cut off the gold from the doors of the Temple to pay even thirty talents of tribute. All the gold used in the building of the tabernacle was twenty-nine talents.[25] The Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon one hundred and twenty talents of gold.[26] David prepared three thousand talents of gold and the princes contributed five thousand for the construction of the Temple.[27] That was regarded as an enormous sum worthy of the offering of a nation.

This man owed ten thousand talents! Ten

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[23] 2 Chron. 36. 3.
[24] 2 Kings 18. 14.
[25] Exod. 38. 24.
[26] 1 Kings 10. 10.
[27] 1 Chron. 29. 1-7.

thousand, a myriad, was the highest number in the Greek arithmetical notation. It represented the limit, something not countable, not conceivable. Such a debt was impossible, unpayable; and the law would have sold such a hopeless debtor with his wife and his children and all he might have in order that part payment at least might be made. However, this king was a king of grace. He did not hold to the rigor of the law, but at the debtor's petition he freely forgave him the whole of his debt.

Then the forgiven debtor went out from the king's court and found another man who owed him one hundred denarii. That was a mere trifle, but he took the man by the throat and demanded immediate cash payment; and when he found that the fellow did not have the money by him, he thrust him into prison and had the full penalty of the law inflicted upon him. That was the parable, and the Master concluded with these words, "Then his Lord called that servant unto him, and saith to him, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desirest me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."[28]

That was the parable and that was the comment of Jesus upon it. We cannot misunderstand that statement. We cannot get away from that conclusion. We can explain away some of the things Jesus said if we are so minded, but we cannot explain away this clear and plain dictum: There is no forgiveness for the man who does not forgive. The parable suggested the incalculable magnitude of our moral indebtedness to God which he freely has forgiven us and the comparatively insignificant indebtedness for which any one of us is called upon to forgive his brother; and in the face of that enormous disproportion the Lord asks: "If this great debt has been forgiven you so freely, ought you not for very gratitude and shamefacedness to forgive these little debts? So much forgiven, so little to forgive; but as you forgive these little things, your Father will forgive those greater things."

We should forgive because we ourselves have been forgiven and, in the second place, because we claim to be the disciples of Jesus; and therefore as professing Christians we are set in the world to exemplify to the world the spirit which the Christ always showed. How fully and how freely he always forgave! He was the Holy One of God, the well-beloved Son, and yet the Jews accused him of having a devil. Although he was one with the Father, they denounced his confession of this truth as pure blasphemy. Yet he labored with them and loved them to the end. He who had eaten his bread and had belonged to the innermost circle of his disciples betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver. The Lord had no word of cutting reproof, but even in the moment of betrayal he called him his friend.

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[28] Matt. 18. 32-35.

That disciple who had been most vehement in his protestations of loyalty denied the Master three times with curses and oaths; and Jesus only cast upon him one sorrowful look and afterward asked him three times, "Simon, lovest thou me?" In that hour of his great agony in Gethsemane he asked his disciples to watch with him in sympathy and prayer, and they all went to sleep; but there was no bitterness in his reproach. He said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Without law and without reason his persecutors struck him with their fists, they spit in his face, they blinded his eyes and they mocked him with all conceivable contumelies, they thrust a crown of thorns upon his head, they wrapped an old purple robe about his shoulders, they bound him to the whipping post and scourged him until his back was covered with blood, they led him to Calvary, and there they nailed his hands and his feet to a tree, and when in his physical torture he cried with thirst they gave him gall and vinegar to drink; but with this gall in his mouth there was no bitterness in his speech or in his heart. He died, praying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

He never had to ask for forgiveness for himself, but he spent his last breath in praying for forgiveness for his brutal torturers. That was the example of Jesus, and we call ourselves his disciples, and we never will be called upon to bear one hundredth part of that which he bore for us; and shall we find it difficult to forgive those who have wronged us when we have been forgiven so fully and freely ourselves? Let us, rather, remember that exhortation of the apostle Paul, "Put on therefore as the elect of God kindness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any one have a grievance against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."[29]

In the sense of his human dependence Jesus himself could have prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread." On the day of the triumphal entry Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify thy name." In the garden of Gethsemane he prayed, "Thy will be done." He could have prayed any of the preceding petitions with his disciples. Could he have said, "Forgive me my debts" when never in his life was he conscious of willful sin? In whatever way we answer that question we know that he could say, "Forgive them"; and in the sense of his complete identity with the race in his humanity and in his sympathy with his brethren in their need it seems to us that he never would have hesitated to pray with them and for them, "Forgive *us* our debts, Lead *us* not into temptation, but deliver *us* from evil." It would be like him to put himself into the sinner's place and make himself wholly one with his brethren in their need and in their petition. Then with what confidence could he have added that second clause, "as we also have forgiven our debtors"! As he forgave we are to forgive, if we are his disciples.

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[29] Col. 3. 12, 13.

The answer to the preceding petitions is dependent upon sincerity and faith. The answer to this petition is dependent upon sincerity and faith and forgiveness. We do not condition our plea upon a purpose to forgive, but upon the fact that we already have forgiven. We do not simply admit that it is our duty to forgive, but we declare that we have performed our duty and have forgiven. We forgive before we ask to be forgiven. The Revised Version translates accurately, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." In the preceding petitions we plead for the grace to do good works, but in this petition we plead the grace of good works as a basis for our further and limitless forgiveness. There is something to be done here before anything is said. We have to prove our discipleship to Jesus before we can use this Disciples' Prayer.

Why should we forgive our brethren? Because so much has been forgiven us, and because we are the disciples of Jesus and we are to forgive even as he forgave; and, in the third place, because of the good it will do in this world. We shall be able to show to the world no such proof of the genuineness of our Christianity as the continuous possession of a forgiving spirit will be.

Here is a practical test of our Christianity, applicable at all times and one of the most powerful persuasives to the Christian life any community can have. Some one asked Gladstone his opinion about preachers and preaching, and he said: "The clergymen of to-day do not sufficiently lay upon the souls of their hearers their moral obligations. . . . The sermons most needed are those similar to the ones which offended Lord Melbourne when he complained that he was obliged to listen to a preacher who insisted upon a man's applying his religion to his private life." Here is a petition with the same insistence in it. It demands that those who pray it first apply their Christian faith to their own private life and then because they have been forgiven and because they are the tested and approved disciples of Jesus and because they have forgiven even as Christ forgave, they are permitted to pray, "Forgive *us our* debts, O God."

Possibly we should remind ourselves that when we pray that others may be forgiven, we are praying that they may be brought to repentance and faith. We pray that they may be sorry for their sins while they live on this earth; but if they are not, we pray that they may find opportunity for repentance and restoration beyond the grave. This prayer may be a prayer both for the living and the dead; and we pray it in faith that it will have final and universal answer.

VI. *Objectors.* There are three classes of people who object to the use of this prayer.

First, there are those who say that we ought not to pray such a petition. They object to this prayer because it sets up man's forgiveness either as the measure of God's forgiveness, which is most foolish, or as the ground of God's forgiveness, which is most absurd. God does not wait for us to set him an example of forgiving, they say. This prayer dishonors God by suggesting a mean conception of his magnanimity. It conditions God's forgiveness upon our own. They say, "We believe in a God so much greater than ourselves and so much better than we are that he never would think of waiting for us to attain to a high state of grace before he would forgive us. This prayer makes his forgiveness depend upon the state of our own souls and that is not good theology."

To such people we answer: "Our forgiveness is neither the measure nor the ground of the forgiveness of God. Insofar you are right. However, it is impossible for God to forgive an unforgiving heart. Insofar you are wrong. The state of our souls does condition the possibility of the reception of God's grace. That is good theology and the only theology to be found in our New Testament, and this petition is in perfect accord with that inherent and inevitable law of the nature of man. It would be well for you to revise your theology until you see the advisability and the necessity of this prayer."

There is a second class of people who say that they do not need to pray this prayer. Their sins have been forgiven them and that transaction is past. They no longer willfully sin and therefore in their sinless perfection they do not need to pray, "Forgive us" any longer. Jerome said that if the saints of God prayed this prayer, they did it out of humility, for they did not truthfully ask forgiveness for themselves. Augustine very justly repudiated this suggestion, and he called Jerome's humility a lying humility, which would be a sin in itself if the man who professed it had had no sin before. "Thou art just; thou art without sin; but on account of this humility thou proclaimest thyself a sinner! God does not accept thy lying humility."[30] Augustine believed that this was a prayer for all and in all periods of their Christian life and he would not admit for an instant that Jesus would put a lie upon the lips of any of his disciples; and he would be doing that if he commanded those who were without sin to pray this prayer and ask for forgiveness when they had nothing to be forgiven.

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[30] Serm. clxxxi. 3.

Yet is it not possible to be saved from conscious and deliberate sin in this life? It surely is, if the gospel message is true. Then can one who is saved from sin continue to pray, "Forgive us our debts"? He surely can and he surely must. The sins from which he is saved are sins of commission, willful transgressions of known laws; but there are sins of omission which are inevitable to our human infirmity and of which the greatest of the saints must be conscious continually. It is these sins of omission which constitute our incalculable debt to our God. Even when the most holy of men knows of no willful transgression he is aware of so many things which he has left undone that he can pray most sincerely, "Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven."

There is an entry in John Wesley's *Journal* for July 24, 1761, which illustrates his common sense in dealing with a passage like this. He says: "In speaking from those words, 'In many things we offend all,' I observed (1) as long as we live, our soul is connected with the body; (2) as long as it is thus connected it cannot think but by the help of bodily organs; (3) as long as these organs are imperfect we are liable to mistakes, both speculative and practical; (4) yea, and a mistake may occasion my loving a good man less than I ought; which is a defective, that is, a wrong temper; (5) for all these we need the atoning blood, as indeed for every defect or omission. Therefore (6) all men have need to say daily, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' "

Many words are used in the New Testament for sin: ἀσέβεια, "ungodliness"; ἀδικία, "unrighteousness"; παρακοή, "disobedience"; παράπτωμα, "a falling away"; παράβασις, "transgression"; and others which, like these, stand for positive acts of sin. Matthew and Luke do not use these words in this prayer. Matthew's word is ὀφείλημα, a debt, and Luke's word is ἀμαρτία, missing of the mark, a falling short of the standard. They both suggest sins of omission rather than of commission, sins of failure rather than overt and defiant transgressions of God's law. It is for these that we pray to be forgiven.

This is no prayer to be omitted by the saints. This is a prayer for the forgiveness of sins of omission; and all the saints have these. This is a saint's prayer. It is only the truest of saints who can say to God, "I have forgiven all who have trespassed against me." Wesley was one of the saints and he said: "I cannot but stand amazed at the goodness of God. Others are most assaulted on the weak side of their soul; but with me it is quite otherwise. If I have any strength at all (and I have none but what I have received), it is in forgiving injuries; and on this very side am I assaulted more frequently than on any other. Yet leave me not here one hour to myself, or I shall betray myself and Thee!"[31] Wesley found it a constant warfare to maintain a forgiving spirit, and he never felt safe for an hour except in the assurance of help from above.

This is not a prayer for sinners to pray while the saints may omit it. It is a prayer which only the saints can pray, and the unrepentant and unforgiving sinner may as well omit it. He will only be praying a curse on his own head if he says it. The greater the saint, the more he will be sensible of his defects and his shortcomings and his unpayable indebtedness to God for everything; and the greater the saint, the more sincerely will he pray, "Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors."

There are those who say that we *ought not* to pray this prayer and there are those who say that they *need not* pray this prayer, and both these classes of people are mistaken in both their practice and their theology. There is a third class who say: "We *cannot* pray this prayer. It demands too much of us. Its standard is too high for us to attain unto it. We believe as Tennyson said in his last poem,

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[31] Wesley's *Journal*, October 29, 1752.

> 'To pray, to do—
> To pray, to do according to the prayer,
> Are both to worship Alla; but the prayers
> Which have no successors in deeds are faint
> And pale in Alla's eyes—fair mothers they,
> Dying in childbirth of dead sons.'

We could say these words, but we find ourselves utterly unable to forgive some things in some people; and if we cannot have forgiveness until we forgive them, we would rather not say these words. We cannot forget certain injuries and we cannot forgive certain persons. Perhaps we can do it when we get to heaven, but in our present state of grace we cannot pray this prayer."

To these people we make answer, "You will never get to heaven unless you forgive your debtors here on earth. You have quoted Tennyson to us. We will quote Tennyson to you:

> 'O man, forgive thy mortal foe,
> Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
> For all the souls on earth that live
> To be forgiven must forgive.
> Forgive him seventy times and seven:
> For all the blessed souls in heaven
> Are both forgivers and forgiven.'

You must give up your rancor or your Redeemer. You must give up your hate or you must give up heaven. God will enable you to do what you cannot do of yourself. Ask for his grace to help you to forgive and then pray this prayer with the other disciples of Jesus."

PART EIGHT

THE SIXTH PETITION

PART EIGHT

THE SIXTH PETITION

Forgiveness in the past and forgiveness in the present will be insufficient to meet our needs, unless God will help us in the future too. When Jesus said, "Thy sins have been forgiven thee," he usually added, "Go, and sin no more." Therefore after the fifth petition we go on immediately to pray, "*And* bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." This sixth petition is a very simple one, but it arouses more questioning in our minds than any other we have met.

I. *Difficulties.* In the first place, all men are tempted. It is inevitable in our state of probation that we shall be tempted as long as we live. Then how can we pray, "Bring us not into temptation," with any faith? If we mean by that prayer, "Deliver us from all temptations, and grant us to live an untempted life," we know when we pray it that that prayer never will be answered. Whether we pray this prayer or do not pray this prayer we shall be tempted every day that we live. Did Jesus pray this prayer, "Lead us not into temptation"? If he did, we know that his prayer was not answered, for the record reads, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, and we are tempted at all points in every day. Our God has organized a moral universe in which temptations are inevitable, and every moral agent is subject to temptation all the time. It is the inevitable condition of our moral probation, the unavoidable necessity of our moral discipline.

To live is to be tempted. To pray to be free from temptation is to pray to be done with life. "Life is too hard for me. Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. Let me die and be done with all of this turmoil and trouble. Relieve me of the burden of existence. Take me out of this world right away. Take me to heaven at once. Let me not live any longer, for to live is to be tempted. Lead me not into temptation, but lead me to that blessed abode where there are no more temptations and where I can be at rest." Is that what we mean when we pray to the Father not to bring us into temptations? Are we asking him for speedy death? Are we praying for instant release from life and the responsibilities of life?

Responsible life is impossible without temptation, and therefore if we wish to continue to live and we continue to pray, "And bring us not into temptation," we know that that prayer will not be answered and that it cannot be answered. How, then, can we pray it in faith? It is of no use to pray it unless we pray it in faith, and we cannot pray it in faith. Therefore it follows that it is of no use to pray it. A prayer which will not be answered and which cannot be answered ought to be omitted from our praying. It is a mere waste of breath. There is the first difficulty in connection with this petition.

A second difficulty is that we feel sure that if the petition could be and would be answered, we ought not to pray it, because temptation is good for us and it would be to our eternal loss if we were freed from it here and now. Temptation is a necessity in our moral probation. It is the ordinance of God that man is to acquire a moral character, for it cannot be given him; and he must have it if he ever is able to enter into communion with his Father in heaven.

Moral character is to be acquired in triumph over temptation. There is no other way. So every man is put upon the battlefield of life to prove himself either a good soldier or a craven coward. Every man is thrust out upon the ocean of life to see whether he will bring his vessel into safe harbor or will send it a hopeless derelict upon the rocks. What would we think of a soldier who would earnestly plead with his commander, "And bring me not into any battle with the foe"? What would we think of any sailor who would say to his captain, "And bring me not out upon the open sea"? They would be on a par with the Christian who prays, "And bring us not into temptation."

In freedom from temptation there might be infantile innocence, but there never could be anything morally superior to that. Moral responsibility entails the necessity of incessant conflict with temptation. There is no other way to attain to the reward of the conqueror. Temptation is not only a necessity in our state of moral probation, but it is a blessing. "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation," says James in his Epistle, for that is the only way in which he can acquire a moral character, and acquired moral character is richly rewarded both here and in heaven. Blessed is the man who endureth temptation, because when he is tried and triumphant he shall receive a crown of life which the Lord hath promised to those who love him. If, then, temptation is not only an inevitable necessity in our present life, but also the guarantee of a proportionate blessedness in the life to come, why should we pray, "And bring us not into temptation"? Ought we not, rather, to pray, "And bring us into as much temptation as thou seest we shall be able with thy grace to endure, in order that our blessedness may be proportionately enhanced"?

The silver and the gold are not freed from the crude ore by the gentle and the mild influence of the moonshine; they must be subjected to the glowing, molten furnace flames. So every human soul goes through the furnace flames of temptation and trial, that the wood and hay and stubble and dross and refuse may all be burned away and the soul may come out purified as by fire. Some souls come through like pure gold or pure silver or precious stones. Some are snatched like brands from the burning. Some never come through at all, but go out of this life tormented in these flames.

Augustine often calls our attention to the fact that it was good for Peter that he was tempted, for through his temptation he learned where his weakness lay and where he could find all needed strength. It was Peter who wrote in his Epistle that his readers should not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which had come upon them to prove them, but they should, rather, rejoice, knowing that the proof of their faith, being more precious than gold which perisheth though it is proved by fire, would be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.[1]

Job said, "When God hath tried me I shall come forth as gold," and he did; God blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. Bishop Latimer declared, "The prophet David saith, *Proba me, Domine, et tenta me*—'Lord, prove me and tempt me.' This prophet knew that to be tempted of God is a good thing, for temptations minister to us occasion to run to God, and to beg his help. Therefore David was desirous to have something whereby he might exercise his faith. For there is nothing so dangerous in the world as to be without trouble, without temptation."[2] Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are. It was good for him to be tempted. He learned obedience by the things which he suffered. He spoke of his disciples as those who had remained with him in all his temptations.

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[1] 1 Pet. 1. 7; 4. 12, 13.

[2] Latimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 369-370.

They had shared in his temptations and trials, and it had been good for them that they had. Jesus never prayed that they might be spared from such experiences, but only that they might be kept from the evil. Shall we ask God to do for us what he would not do for Jesus? It was the Father's will that Jesus should be tempted with hunger and thirst and privation, with slander and misunderstanding and persecution, and with the final testing of the divine dereliction. He did not spare his Son from the suffering of all these things. Have we any reason to think or to wish that he would spare us from being tempted in all points even as Jesus was?

No temptation, no sainthood. No temptation, no achievement of character. No temptation, no crown. No battle, no victory. Therefore it was that Jesus said, "No untempted man will attain to the heavenly realms."[3] Sin has its power of attraction. Our hearts have their tendencies to evil. Our God has ordained these things for our good. If there were no conflict there could be no character. We would be doomed to spiritual immaturity. We would be like infants or idiots for all time to come. There would be no spiritual heroism or Christian perfection of faith or achievement.

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[3] An agraphon, found in Tertullian, de Bapt. xx. Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, vol. v, p. 347.

Milton knew that temptation was good for the soul when he wrote,

> "Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt;
> Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
> Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm,
> Shall in the happy trial prove most glory . . .
> If this fail,
> The pillared firmament is rottenness,
> And earth's base built on stubble."[4]

Browning had the triumphant faith of the New Testament when he made the good old Pope to say,

> "Why comes temptation but for man to meet
> And master and make crouch beneath his foot,
> And so be pedestaled in triumph? Pray
> 'Lead us into no such temptations, Lord!'
> Yea, but O Thou whose servants are the bold,
> Lead such temptations by the head and hair,
> Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,
> That so he may do battle and have praise!"[5]

The Christian hero and saint will count it all joy when he falls into manifold temptations, knowing that blessed is he who endures these things both in time and in eternity, and believing that the way into the Heavenly City lies straight across these fallen and conquered foes. It is our faith that it is good for us to be tempted. We know that we shall be tempted as long as we live and rejoice in the fact that this need not be our undoing, but, rather, may be our making. We count it all joy to have the chance to achieve the victory with God's aid.

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[4] *Comus*, l. 589f.

[5] Browning, "The Ring and the Book," book x, ll. 1185f.

We think of Joseph as a good example of constant temptation and continuous triumph. He is living in the quiet home of the patriarch or in the fields with the shepherds, the favorite of his father and favored with visions from God; but his brothers envy him and hate him and mistreat him, and he is tempted to resentment in return. Now he is lifted to a condition of comparative splendor in the palace of Potiphar; and in the new situation new temptations throng in upon his soul, temptations to covetousness, unchastity, extravagance in dress, and intemperance in food and drink and life. Now he is cast into prison; and in the changed circumstances the temptations are changed, but he is tempted still, tempted to murmuring against the injustice of his imprisonment, the seeming forsaking of God, the ingratitude of his fellow prisoner, tempted to despair of God's goodness and the fulfillment of God's promise to him. Now he is lifted again into liberty and set upon the throne with the king; and every day Joseph wrestles with giant temptations to self-conceit and self-confidence and self-exaltation. Joseph was tempted in every condition of his life; and he was triumphant in temptation because he trusted in God. As with him so with us; we will be tempted every day we live. As with him so it may be with us; we can be triumphant over temptation as long as we live.

Shall we ever be free from temptation? No. Shall we be able to withstand temptation in our own strength? No. Can God enable us to come off more than conquerors? Yes. Then we shall need to ask him to lead us and to help us in the moral conflict in which we must perforce engage. Will he lead us into temptation? Of course not. God tempts no man. Let no man say when he is tempted, "I am tempted of God," for God tempteth no man. Let no man pray to God when he is tempted, "Lead me not into temptation," for God tempts no man.

There is the third difficulty in connection with this petition. We cannot pray it in faith, because we know that it will not and cannot be answered. We cannot pray it with any sincerity, because we know that it ought not to be answered, since temptation is good for us and necessary to our achievement of character. We cannot pray it with any reverence for the Word which tells us that God tempts no man; and it savors of blasphemy on a Christian's lips to suggest in his prayer that his Father in heaven would bring him into temptation or solicit him to evil of any kind. That may have been a part of the Old Testament creed. We read in that ancient record that God tempted David into a numbering of the people and then punished him for it as a sin. The last book of the Old Testament canon was the book of Chronicles, and when the writer of that book came to the record of that incident, he felt that it would be wrong for him to hold God responsible for any temptation to sin and so he wrote that Satan tempted David to the numbering. We shall not fall behind him in the hallowing of God's name.

We reverence our God too much to believe that he ever will lead or bring men into temptation in the sense of directly soliciting them to any evil. That theology is outgrown. It is repudiated by every Christian as unworthy of the Father in heaven revealed in Jesus Christ. It was the faith of the Greek philosopher and of the Roman Stoic that God would tempt no man to evil, and we would be ashamed to cherish any lower conception of the unfailing goodness of God than they had attained through natural reason. God permits no temptation to come upon us but such as we may be able to bear. He makes a way of escape for us when we need to escape. He delivers us out of temptations and enables us to triumph over them by his grace. If he is our leader, we cannot fail as long as we follow him.

He will lead us into the presence of temptation, within sight of it, within reach of it. It is his way of determining whether we will flee from it or follow after it, whether we will fight with it or fall into its arms. His promise is, "Struggle against the temptation and I will help you to victory." The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations. "The Lord knoweth how."[6] That statement is ascribed to Peter and Peter might have said it, for he knew that was true. He had had plenty of personal experience along that line. Peter never would forget that experience in Gethsemane. The Master had said to them there, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."[7] He did not say, "Pray that you may not be tempted." He knew that that would be a useless and a foolish prayer. He knew that Peter was about to be tempted as he never had been before in his life. He did not counsel Peter to flee from temptation, but to pray for such spiritual strengthening that he might not "enter into" the temptation and thus be overcome by it.

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[6] 2 Pet. 2. 9.

[7] Matt. 26. 41.

It may be said to be a fact of experience that a man never enters into a temptation until the temptation enters into him. We say that a man is in Christ only when Christ dwells within him. We say that only those are in the kingdom of God who have the kingdom of God within them. In the same way a man falls into sin only when sin has entered into him. As long as a man keeps temptation without, gives it no lodgment in his heart, his desire, his will, as long as he does not allow temptation to enter into him, it does him no harm and it may do him good; it does not lead to sin and it may lead to great strengthening.

The Master said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation"; and Peter went to sleep instead of keeping awake. He spent the hour in snoring instead of supplication; and when temptation came he plunged headlong into denial and betrayal of the Master he loved. Jesus spent that hour in prayer, and he obtained heavenly strengthening and went on to the cross without fear. Peter might have spent that hour in prayer with the Master, and he might have had the same strengthening, and he might have been able to overcome his temptations even as Jesus overcame. Peter entered into them; Jesus met them and conquered them, every one. He had watched and prayed, and no temptation found any welcome or lodgment in his mind or heart. The Father knew how to deliver out of temptation the one who had watched and prayed in faith in him.

Luther said that he prayed the first five petitions of the model prayer at night, and then he went to bed and slept soundly. In the morning when he woke he began the prayers of a new day with this sixth petition; and then he went out to the day's work bravely. He thought that the fifth petition was the fitting petition for the close of the day, "Forgive us our debts," for we need each day to pray that prayer. Then he thought that this sixth petition was the fitting petition to begin each day, for each day brings the certainty of new temptations and the possibility of new trespasses, and we need to pray for deliverance from these. Then he went boldly forth into the day's duties and the day's trials, saying, "The Lord is my helper, and the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from all his temptations."

That is the Christian faith in this matter of temptation. God helps, God delivers, God saves from temptation and in temptation. God never leads into temptation and never solicits to evil. God is the infinitely good and it is impossible that he ever will lead his children into situations where their virtue may be seduced and their righteous character overcome. Therefore we cannot pray to him, "And bring us not into temptation," without doing violence to all our faith in him. It is Mephistophelian and Machiavellian to seek to inveigle innocent souls into evil. The God whom Jesus revealed to us is not capable of any such thing. He solicits to good and to nothing but good. He never tries to deceive us or mislead us or make us do wrong. On the contrary, he has done everything he could for us to help us to do the right and nothing but the right as soon as the right is known.

Let no man say when he is tempted that God has brought him into that temptation, for God tempts no man. He brings every gracious influence to bear upon every man to save him from being overcome by temptation and yielding to sin.

"Lord, with what care hast thou begirt us round!
  Parents first season us; then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us bound
  To rules of reason, holy messengers,
Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,
  Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,
Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in,
  Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,
Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,
  The sound of glory ringing in our ears,
Without our shame, within our consciences,
  Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears:"—

these are all helps which God has given us to save us from temptation and to deliver us from any thought of indulgence in sin or satisfaction with sin.

If God tempts no one and brings no one into temptation, why should we pray to him not to do it? The prayer is answered before we utter it, and it is a waste of breath to ask God not to do what he will not do and cannot do without belying his own nature. Why should we pray for an impossibility? God never will tempt anybody, whether we pray this prayer or not. Our prayer will change nothing and can change nothing in the constitution of the moral universe. It is a superfluous, useless, vain petition, and if we repeat it day after day, it is a superfluous, useless, vain repetition. Jesus told us not to use vain repetitions. Yet Jesus told his disciples to pray, "And bring us not into temptation." How are we to reconcile these two facts?

There are these four difficulties in connection with this petition: First, it will not be answered; it cannot be answered; all men will be tempted as long as they live. Second, it would not be good for any man to have this prayer answered, for in the good providence of God, temptations have been appointed as the necessary means for the acquirement of character and the achievement of holiness and heaven. Third, God solicits no man to evil, and it savors of blasphemy to pray to him not to do it. We cannot hallow his name and pray to him not to be a Mephistopheles or a Machiavelli toward us at the same time. Fourth, Jesus told his disciples to pray, "Hallowed be thy name," and also, "Bring us not into temptation." What can a commentator or an expositor do in this dilemma? Is there any way out of all of these difficulties?

II. *Interpretations.* It is almost amusing, if there were not an element of pathos and of tragedy in it as well, to see how the commentators and the expositors writhe and twist in their efforts to show that this is a valid and proper petition for Christians to make. Some tell us that temptation here is not a solicitation to evil, but a trial, a test, a proving; and that God does bring us into such trials for our good. If this be true and these trials are for our good, why should we pray to be delivered from them? God knows what is best for us; and if he brings us into these trials because he knows that it will be best for us, who are we to set up our judgment against his and to pray him to reconsider and bring us not into temptations or trials?

7 Then, whatever we may mean by trials, we know that, like temptations, they are inevitable in human existence and it is as little use to pray to be delivered from them as it would be to pray for life without any other of its inevitable accompaniments. Every man has his trials, greater or less. No life is without them. They are sure to come upon us, whether we pray this prayer or we do not pray it. It is just as useless to pray, "And bring us not into trials" as it is to pray, "And bring us not into temptations." The difficulties are not eliminated from the prayer by trying to foist a different meaning upon the word *πειρασμόν*. We cannot escape trials and temptations by the use of this prayer. We are praying for the impossible if we are asking to be delivered from either of them. Most of the commentators abide by the usual meaning of the word *πειρασμόν*, and realizing that God

never tempts anyone, but that when a man is tempted he is led away by his own lust and enticed, they proceed to explain this petition in accordance with that fact. William Tyndale said: "Lead us not into temptation—that is, let us not slip out of thy leash, but hold us fast; give us not up, nor cease to govern us, nor take thy Spirit from us. For as a hound cannot but follow his game when he sees it before him, if he be loose; so can we not but fall into sin when occasion is given us, if thou withdraw thine hand from us." Godet closely follows this line of thought when he says, "The prayer really is: Let me do nothing this day which would force thee for a single moment to withdraw thy hand, and to give me over to one of the snares which the evil one will plant in my way. This is what a pious man used to express in the following terms: If the occasion of sinning presents itself, grant that the desire may not be found in me; if the desire is there, grant that the occasion may not present itself."

This prayer of the pious man is in effect to be shielded from all possibility of yielding to temptation and falling into sin; for to be freed conveniently from either the desire to sin or the occasion to sin as need required would be to be kept beyond the possibility of sin at any time. If that is what the prayer means, it is a prayer for an impossibility again; for no man is free from the possibility of sin as long as he lives and it is only by the recognition of the possibility of sin and the allurement of sin and the choice of the right and the good in preference to indulgence in sin that a man can achieve a holy character. Both Tyndale and Godet seem to resolve the prayer for the active impulse and guidance of God, "And bring us not into temptation," into the opposite passive withdrawal of God's impulse and guidance: "Leave us not to follow our own impulses, O Lord." All difficulties with the petition may be avoided in that way, by changing it into something entirely different; but as soon as we realize that the petition itself is radically changed all our old questionings concerning it are likely to return. The petition is "Bring us not" or "Lead us not," and that is quite different from "Leave us not to ourselves," or "Abandon us not by the withdrawal of thy Spirit." If God leaves us, he is not leading us. When God abandons us, he is not bringing us anywhere.

Augustine declared, "We pray that we may not be so deprived of his assistance as to yield to any temptation either through being deceived or through being overcome."[8] What conception of the Father in heaven lies behind any suggestion like this? Is he One who will deprive his children of his assistance just when they most need him? Will he abandon them when they are in danger of being deceived or overcome? Or is he the ever-faithful One, never leaving us nor forsaking us, never withholding from us any good thing or any necessary aid? Do we need to pray to him not to abandon us? Would it not be lack of faith rather than faith which would prompt such a prayer? Can a trusting child formulate such a petition?

Tertullian paraphrased this petition, so as to make it read, *"Ne nos induci in tentationem patiaris"*—"Do not permit us to be led into temptation," and Cyprian agreed that that must be the meaning, "Do not suffer us to be led into temptation." That seemed to relieve God in some measure from the responsibility of actively leading men into temptation while it left him passively permitting or suffering the man's own lusts or something or someone else to do it. It is sufficient to say that the verb in this petition is active and that it is simply closing one's eyes to the difficulty presented by that active verb when we paraphrase or interpret it into a passive form or meaning.

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[8] Augustine, ep. cxxx. 21; de serm. in monte, ii. 25, 82.

We find one of the more liberal theologians concluding: "We have, therefore, ceased to pray 'Lead us not into temptation,' and we pray instead, 'Leave us not in temptation'; that is, 'Leave us not alone and unaided when we are tempted.' "[9] He believes that God does tempt men and that it would be both futile and childish to pray that God would alter the whole course of his Divine Providence to shield us from the common fate. Somewhat to our surprise we find one of the most conservative and orthodox of the theologians agreeing with this conclusion almost word for word. "God may perhaps now and then even lead us into temptations: but he will not leave us in the midst of them. He will be with us to guide us through the peril."[10] These men seem to think that if we only could change, "*Lead* us not *into* temptation" into "*Leave* us not *in* temptation," they could pray the prayer without hesitation; but it is very patent that this is a different prayer and leaves the original with all its difficulties.

A favorite interpretation is that of Newman

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[9] Voysey, *The Sling and the Stone*, vol. viii, p. 86.

[10] Augustus W. Hare, *Sermons on the Lord's Prayer*, pp. 82-83.

Hall, who quotes from the apostle Paul, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,"[11] and then adds, "God does suffer us to be tempted, but we pray that no temptation may be beyond our strength; we pray, not that we may escape being tempted at all, but that our escape may be in the way of endurance and victory. . . . We have need to pray from the inmost heart, O Father, lead us not into temptation; I pray not that I may be utterly delivered from all temptation, for that would be a fearful state . . . but be thou our help, that we consent not unto them, and thus be taken and overcome by them."[12] Aked agrees. He interprets the petition to be, "Our Father, bring us not into temptation too great and hard for us. . . . Make not too large a demand upon our faith, courage, and resolution; bring us not into the fiery testing which may prove too severe for our yielding hearts; our Father, bring us not into conditions which shall too sorely try us, for we know ourselves and our weakness, and we may fail!"[13]

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[11] 1 Cor. 10. 13.

[12] Hall, *The Lord's Prayer*, pp. 355, 356-357.

[13] Aked, *The Lord's Prayer*, pp. 174, 161.

Goulburn has the same gloss, "Suffer not the devil to try me above my strength."[14] He says, "The petition may be paraphrased thus: Place me not, O God, in circumstances which either my peculiar natural temperament, or my age, or some unexpected turn of fortune, will make severely trying to me."[15] Bengel said, "We do not pray that there may not be a temptation, but that it may not conquer us." Sparrow-Simpson says tersely enough, "We do not mean, Suffer me not to be tempted, but rather, Suffer me not to fail."[16] George Milligan comments in like fashion: "We think of the temptations and difficulties which are lying before us, and ask for the needful grace and strength to meet them. It is as if with the psalmist we cried, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?' (Psa. 58. 13)."[17]

Others have made this petition to mean, "Do not suffer us to succumb to temptation, but make for us a way to escape,"[18] or, "Lead us not so far into temptation, that a way back shall be impossible; suffer us not to be so inextricably entangled in it, that there shall be no means of escape; but with the temptation make ever the way of deliverance."[19] This method of interpretation seemed to appeal to the practical and devotional minds of the Wesleys. John Wesley in his notebook used in preparation for the meetings of the Holy Club there at Oxford wrote the petition in this form: "Suffer us not to be tempted above our power, or to fall when we are tempted," and Charles Wesley put the same thought into his hymn,

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[14] Goulburn, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 270.

[15] Goulburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-251.

[16] Sparrow-Simpson, *Addresses on the Lord's Prayer*, p. 121.

[17] Milligan, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 129.

[18] Tait, *The Charter of Christianity*, p. 387.

"From trials unexempted
Thy dearest children are;
But let us not be tempted
Above what we can bear;
Exposed to no temptation
That may our souls o'erpower,
Be Thou our strong salvation
Through every fiery hour."

Of all these interpretations of the petition it is sufficient to quote the conclusion of Robert Eyton, Canon of Westminster: "One has read all sorts of elaborate explanations of it; for example, that it means that we are to ask not to be tempted too much or not to be tempted beyond what we can bear; but if it means any of these things, the question comes naturally, Why does it not say so? . . . 'Bring us not into temptation,' is assuredly one prayer, and 'Suffer us not to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear,' is obviously quite another."[20] Sure enough. We might be very glad to join with the saints in any of these other petitions, but quite obviously they are not the petition given to the disciples by Jesus and all our difficulties have to do with it. We might suppose that Canon Eyton himself would offer us an interpretation which would be in line with the obvious meaning of the original petition, but he goes back to the suggestion of Tertullian and Cyprian and makes it a prayer against self-confidence or a prayer that God will not leave us to be tempted by our self-will.

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[19] Trench, *St. Augustine on the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 261.

He says: "In very truth it is a prayer against ourselves that we may not go to dangerous places, or be with persons who do us harm; that we may not get that for which we have a false taste, be it riches, or honor, or human love, or wisdom; that we may not say, 'Tush, I shall never be cast down, there shall no harm happen unto me.' We humbly pray that He who plans our lives and regulates our temptations and trials will keep us from becoming our own tempters, will keep us from hard and difficult situations; for example, from the burden and the strain of conflicting duties, as well as from the self-confidence which rushes into temptation, and assuredly merits the failure which awaits it."[21] It is quite obvious that this prayer is as far removed from the original as the paraphrases Eyton so concisely criticized.

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[20] Eyton, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 199.

If this petition is not that we may not be tempted beyond our strength, and just as obviously is not that we may not be left to our own devices, what can we understand it to mean? Is there any sense in which we may pray it with consent of mind and heart? Sir Richard Baker says: "What is, then, our prayer? that he will not lead us into the rugged ways of temptation, where we may dash our foot against a stone, but that he will lead us in the even paths of righteousness, where our feet may neither slip nor stumble; and if he do not always hold his hand over us, to keep us from taking falls, that yet, at least, he will put his hand under and keep us from taking harms."[22] Evidently, Sir Richard does not expect God to save him from temptations, or even from falling under the stress of temptation, but he hopes that God will save him from serious harm. If that is the extent of his faith, why should he pray, "And bring us not into temptation"? He nowhere answers that question, and neither do any of the other expositors of the prayer whom we have been able to consult.

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[21] Eyton, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-203.

[22] Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

Washington Gladden declares that this is a petition to be saved from suffering. "It is a simple, natural expression of desire that the Lord would mercifully lead us not into but away from the furnace of affliction in which souls are sometimes tried."[23] He illustrated with the prayer of Paul that the thorn might be removed from his flesh and with the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane that the cup, if it were possible, might pass from him. Then he concludes: "Trials there are that tax the endurance and the courage of the strongest hearts; it is not only no sin, it is but imitation of the example of Christ Jesus our Lord, to pray to be shielded from them."[24] This seems to us like a refuge of despair.

This prayer was given to the disciples for their daily use, and the other petitions have their daily application. What reason have we for thinking that this petition was to be of service only in great crises and absolutely unique experiences like those of Jesus and Paul? Jesus and Paul did not pray those particular prayers daily. They prayed them only upon special occasions and then they repeated them three times and quit. If this petition has to do only with great trials and very unusual and severe afflictions, it has no place in this formula for daily repetition. If it is a prayer for deliverance from any and all suffering, it asks for another impossibility in our human existence in this present evil world.

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[23] Gladden, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 176.

[24] Gladden, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

Canon Williams also looks to the Garden of Gethsemane to find his illustration of the meaning of this petition, but not in the Master's prayer there, but in his exhortation to the three disciples. He says: "What does our Lord mean us to ask for? I think we are much helped to our Lord's meaning by recalling his charge to the three disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, 'Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation' (Matt. 26. 41). The temptation was coming, it was good for them that it should come, but it was very full of danger. He bade them to be watchful and to pray earnestly, not that they might not come into the temptation, not that they might be delivered from it, but that they might not enter into it in will, that they might not consent to it and so be overcome by it."[25]

We already have prayed in this prayer that the will of God might be done on earth as it is done in heaven; and that prayer, if it meant anything at all, included the petition that our own wills might be conformed to the Divine will and therefore not consenting to or overcome by any solicitation to evil. If that were the meaning of this petition, it surely would be superfluous after the third petition. In a short formula like the one we are studying the Master surely would not have repeated himself in giving his petitions. Each petition ought to represent something new.

We are not satisfied with any explanation of this petition we can find. There seems to be a hopeless contradiction between this portion of the sixth petition in the Disciples' Prayer and the teaching of the later revelation in the New Testament that God tempts no man and that temptation is necessary and good for the race. We cannot see how any Christian who believes these truths concerning God and concerning temptation can pray "Bring us not into temptation," as a separate petition with any faith or with any sincerity. Those who pray it probably hope that it may have partial answer, and that they may be saved from some temptations or from especially severe temptations while they have no hope at all that they will be saved from all temptations, even though they ask that God may not bring them into any. Most of those who repeat this petition do it, of course, without thinking, and as a mere matter of habit; and to all such it is nothing more than a vain repetition, a pious practice which helps them to feel that they are religious whether they pray with the understanding or not.

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[25] Williams, *Spiritual Instructions*, pp. 124-125.

Therefore we conclude to recognize only six petitions in this prayer instead of seven, and to believe that the prayer closes with "one of those sentences containing two antithetical or contrasted clauses, in which the emphasis is really on the second clause, and the first clause, though co-ordinate in construction, is really subordinate in thought, serving to bring out more clearly by contrast the force of the second, so that if separated from its connection and taken by itself the first clause may convey a false impression."[26]

We understand that this part of the prayer, "And bring us not into temptation," means nothing of itself and in itself might convey the false impression that we expected to be saved from all temptation, but the whole force of the petition comes upon the next clause, "but deliver us from evil," and the prayer as a whole is not a prayer for exemption from temptation and evil, but for deliverance in and from it. Was not that the Master's prayer for the disciples in that upper room? "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."[27] With that prayer we find ourselves in fullest sympathy. It is not a prayer for an impossibility, and it is not a prayer for instant death and removal to a better world. It is a prayer for salvation in our present circumstances, promised in our gospel and guaranteed by God's grace.

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[26] *Expositor*, Third Series, vol. vii, p. 439.

However, if there are only six petitions in this prayer, and the sixth is merely a prayer for deliverance out of the evil of the world and not for exemption from all experience of it, we may as well face the fact that that means that this clause, "And bring us not into temptation," means nothing at all and could just as well be omitted.

There are such sentences in the New Testament, where the whole force of the statement falls upon the second clause. Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans, "Thanks be to God, that ye were servants of sin, but ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching into which ye were led."[28] Did he thank God that those to whom he wrote were at one time servants of sin? Of course not. That was a matter for regret and not for thanksgiving. That was a matter for eternal regret; but it heightened Paul's thanksgiving for their salvation and their present obedience to the faith when he thought of that from which they had been saved. The thanksgiving fell wholly upon their obedience, but Paul's statement of his thanksgiving begins, "Thanks be to God that ye were servants of sin." If a period were put at that point in the sentence, the statement would be false. The thanksgiving did not fall upon that fact, but upon the one which followed it.

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[27] John 17. 15.

Another good example is furnished in the thanksgiving of Jesus in the prayer recorded in the First Gospel. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."[29] Did Jesus thank the Father that his gospel had been hidden from anybody? Was he glad that anyone had failed to receive his truth? Of course not. It was the desire of his heart that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. It was the great grief of his heart that any hearts should be hardened and any eyes should be closed to the glories of his revelation. He was thankful that the revelation had been made unto babes, and that was all that he was thankful for. Yet he begins his prayer by saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent." If a period were put at that point in the sentence, the statement would be false. Jesus never thanked the Father for that at all. The whole of his thanksgiving fell upon the fact set forth in the clause next following.

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[28] Rom. 6. 17.

[29] Matt. 11. 25.

It is true then that in the New Testament we have certain sentences in which the former of two clauses sets forth a statement contrary to reality and whose only purpose is to heighten the effect of the statement made in the clause in the latter half of the sentence. If anyone chooses to conclude that we have an example of this rhetorical form in these two clauses in the Lord's Prayer, he is free to do so; but as soon as he so decides, it follows that the petition "And bring us not into temptation" represents a falsehood in his faith and does not represent his real petition which is expressed only in the following clause.

We believe that the prayer "And bring us not into temptation" will not be and cannot be answered. We believe that it would not be a good thing for us if it were answered. We believe that God tempts no man and that it therefore savors of blasphemy for any Christian to use this petition. We believe that none of these difficulties is met satisfactorily in any of the usual interpretations. They loom just as large on our hands after we have read the commentators and the expositors through as they did in the beginning. Therefore we decide to eliminate this clause as a separate petition and to recognize only six petitions in the Lord's Prayer, all the stress of the sixth petition falling on the closing clause and the beginning clause serving only to emphasize its force. Standing alone, we could not pray it with any reverence or faith. We turn with some sense of relief to the real prayer in the following clause, "But deliver us from evil," and we pray it without hesitation.

III. *Evil Defined.* The first question to be decided here is the meaning of the word "evil." It is a very general term in both the Greek and the English. What does it mean in this petition? From what do we pray to be delivered, when we use this formula? In all probability most people are content to make no answer to that question, but, rather, to hope that while they pray this prayer they will be delivered from any and all evil from which it is possible for them to be delivered and so to let it go at that. Those who are not satisfied with vague generalities and who desire to pray definitely, with some clear notion of that for which they are praying in their minds when they pray, will ask themselves what this evil is from which they pray to be delivered.

Possibly this is the most natural and instinctive prayer to be found in this list of petitions. Men would have prayed this prayer if Jesus had said nothing about it. Those who recognized the providence of God in the affairs of their daily life might have prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread," but many men go through life without realizing any necessity for making that petition. Their daily bread seems to them secure at all times, and they conclude that they can get it for themselves without resorting to prayer to a Higher Power for its furnishing. However, it is not at all likely that any men go through life without feeling at some time or other their utter helplessness in face of sudden danger, or in the clutch of nature's powers, or in dire mental and spiritual calamity. When they are in their extremity they naturally and instinctively turn to high Heaven for help.

"Good Lord, deliver us!" In one form or another it is the inevitable cry of the human heart for superhuman aid; and some time or other in every man's life the occasion for such an appeal is likely to occur. Men cry it in intolerable pain and in overwhelming sorrow as well as under conviction for sin. Men cry it in tornadoes and earthquakes, in the hail of shot and shell in the hell of battle, in times of pestilence and plague and flood and fire and widespread calamity as well as in times of revival. This is a present evil world in which we live, and when the sense of its evils becomes unendurable every man cries "O Father, deliver us from evil." It is the most natural thing for him to do. He does not care to know anything about the cause of evil, the genesis of evil, or the future fate of evil, it may be. He does not even care to analyze the evil and decide what its exact or ultimate nature is. He simply recognizes that it is evil and prays to be delivered from it; as Peter did when he was sinking in the sea, "Lord, save, or I perish," and as the dying thief did on the cross, "Remember me when thou comest to thy kingdom."

Men pray in such situations, but they seldom or never philosophize. So, without reflection, without premeditation, without philosophizing men pray this prayer instinctively when they are in trouble. Shall the Christian pray it in the same way, or shall he decide just what the evil is before he prays each day to be delivered from it? When the prayer ceases to be the spontaneous outburst of the present necessity and becomes a formula for daily repetition, it is time to ask what it means.

There are various kinds of evil in the world. There are outward evils and there are inward evils. There are temporal evils and corporal evils and spiritual. There are evils in the church and in the state. Poverty is an evil. Loneliness is an evil. Pain is an evil. Sickness is an evil. Disappointment is an evil. Heartache is an evil. Temporal losses are an evil. Bereavement is an evil. Sorrow, care, disease, death, slander, persecution, war, failures, and defeat may all be regarded as evil. Can we ask and do we ask to be delivered from all of these? Fleas and mosquitoes, rats and mice, flies and other vermin are evils. Dust and dirt, thorns and thistles and weeds, all the pests of the cattle and of the human race are evils. Can we ask and do we ask to be delivered from all of these?

Why not? We believe that any child of the heavenly Father may ask for anything which seems to him to be a good—for health, for fair weather, for temporal prosperity, for deliverance from any form of temporal or corporal or national evil and can be sure that the Father will grant his petition if it be for his present and his eternal good. However, he must wait to find that out. He must preface every such petition with, "If it be thy will, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but thy will be done. It seems to me that this would be best; but thou knowest better than I, and I pray for it subject to the decision of thy will." That is to say, we can pray conditionally for the removal of any seeming evil of our experience; but without the special and particular charism of faith we cannot pray unconditionally for anything of this kind. This petition is unconditional in itself; and therefore, it would seem most likely that Jesus did not have these temporal and corporal and local and particular evils in mind when he told his disciples to pray, "Deliver us from evil."

He did not say, "Deliver us from evils," but most specifically "from the evil," the singular noun with the definite article, *ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*. What is *"the* evil"? There would seem to be only one answer to that question to one who knows the gospel of Jesus. To his mind the one evil from which the race needed to be delivered and for the deliverance from which he had come into the world was the evil of sin. These other evils we have mentioned might be blessings in disguise, might work us good in the end. The sickness might result in sainthood. The disappointment might prove to be God's appointment for our discipline and perfecting. The cross might lead to a crown. The loss might be transformed into great gain. The things which men count evil may be coincident with the greatest good to a Christian man, while the things which most men count good may seem to him coincident with the greatest evil. The only ultimate evil is sin and the separation from God caused by sin. The greatest deliverance will be salvation from sin.

Saint Bernard declared that only those things were evil which hindered the soul's ascent to God. Then he mentioned as examples the "bodily needs—the need of food and sleep—which often hinder devotion; faults of character and temperament, such as levity, or motions of impatience, vanity, envy, and other sins of infirmity; worldly prosperity on the one hand and adversity on the other, weighing down the soul with cares and distractions; our own perilous ignorance, which hinders us from knowing how to act or even what to ask in prayer; the companionship of false brethren, who by persuasion or example, by flattery or detraction, hinder or divert us from the service of God."

Martin Luther, the Protestant saint, agreed with the Roman Catholic saint that nothing was evil comparable to that which would shut off his communion with God. He cried, "O my most dear God, I thank thee that thou hast made me poor and a beggar upon earth. O my God, punish me far rather with pestilence, with all the terrible sicknesses on earth, with war, with anything, rather than that thou be silent to me." There is only one fatal evil and that is sin. There is only one absolute evil and that is the evil which is within. Moral evil, not physical evil nor temporal evil nor national evil, is the evil, from which we pray daily to be delivered, the self-will which asserts itself in opposition to the will of God.

Augustine interpreted this prayer to mean, "Deliver us from ourselves."[30] We cannot be delivered from all evils as long as we live in this present evil world. That would be as impossible as to be delivered from all temptations while we remained in this state of probation on earth. The evil from which we can be delivered while we are in the world and upon the earth is the evil in ourselves. We may be in an evil condition without being evil in character. In the midst of disappointments and distresses, pressed on every side, perplexed, pursued, smitten down, delivered unto death, we may be fully saved all the time. We may be delivered from sin.

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[30] Augustine, Serm. clxxxii, 4. *Quid est Libera nos a malo? . . . A nobis ipsis.*

What did those early Christians there in Carthage say when they were sentenced to death for their faith? "Then we were condemned to the wild beasts, and with hearts full of joy we returned to our prison"; with hearts full of joy, because God was delivering them from the evil of this present world and from the evil of apostasy and separation from himself. They could have sung Sir John Bowring's hymn of praise to God there in the prison cell:

"From a heart of hate and blindness,
From all envy, treachery, pride,
From all harshness or unkindness,
All to sin or shame allied,
God of goodness, us deliver,
And thy name be praised forever.

"From the world's deceitful pleasures,
From its soul-invading snares,
From the plotter's darkened measures,
Foolish thoughts and trifling cares,
God of goodness, us deliver,
And thy name be praised forever.

"In the time of tribulation,
In the bright and prosperous way,
In the hour of life's prostration,
In the final Judgment Day,
God of goodness, us deliver,
And thy name be praised forever."

This is a prayer to be delivered from the evil which is within ourselves, from all hardness of heart and blindness of heart and uncleanness of heart which would preclude our constant vision of God and our continuous union and communion with him. It is not a prayer to be delivered from the things which are displeasing to us but the things which are displeasing to God, from perversity of will, and vexation of spirit, from confusion of conscience and darkness of understanding, from anything and everything which tends toward alienation from God. This prayer is answered in full salvation from sin. Sin is the evil of all evils, and we have seen how sin harbored in the heart and life prevents any one from cherishing any hope that any part of this prayer will be answered for him.

Sin is fatal to the filial spirit and to the fraternal spirit as well. How can the voluntary sinner say "Our Father" with any sincerity at all? Sin shuts the door of heaven in our face. He who has clean hands and a pure heart can ascend into the holy place with his petition; but how can the man with unclean hands and impure heart venture into the presence of "Our Father who art in heaven"? Sin slanders God. How can a sinner pray, "Hallowed be thy name"? Sin is the only barrier to the entrance of the Kingdom into human hearts and into all the world. How can the man who is allied with sin pray, "Thy kingdom come"? The essence of sin is self-will and opposition to the will of God. How can a sinner pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," while he himself is refusing to do the will of God?

Sin claims all it earns and all it has for itself, and refuses to thank God for any of it. How can a sinner pray, "Give us our daily bread," if his daily bread is the product of iniquity? Sin daily adds to man's indebtedness. How can the man who consciously and willfully continues in sin pray with any sincerity, "Forgive us our debts"? The first evidence of his willingness to be forgiven would be found in his willingness to quit adding to his indebtedness as far as that might be possible. Only the man who once for all has broken with sin and is saved from conscious and willful sin can pray any of these petitions with sincerity and power. Only such a man has any right to expect an answer to all or any of them.

Therefore this petition stands at the end of the list of six petitions, as the one which *must* be answered in order that the others may be offered in faith. "Our Father, who art in heaven, The Most Holy and the Most High, deliver us from sin in order that we may be holy as thou art holy and so may hallow thy name and be worthy to represent thy kingdom on earth." The *Lay Folks' Catechism* of 1537, which may have been written by John Wiclif himself, paraphrases this last petition as follows:

"The worst thing in this world is wickedness of sin;
therefore a man for nothing should will to do sin,
since for all this world and for naught therein should any man do sin.
But since some sins be much worse than some
in this last asking we pray deliverance of the worst sin.
The worst sin is the devil's sin,
that man dies in without repentance,
that ever shall be punished: and that calls the gospel
sin against the holy Ghost.
God for his great mercy keep us from this evil
and then shall we have everlasting freedom. Amen."

The sin against the Holy Ghost is any sin in which one persists with the full consciousness of its sinfulness, any unrepented sin; for such never can have forgiveness either in this age or any age to come. From persistent sin, from conscious sin, from willful sin, we pray to be delivered and the prayer is answered for all who pray it in sincerity and faith.

It is the fact of sin which makes the moral tragedy of the race. It is the vice and crime in society which make it leprous and lame. It is the selfishness and greed in industry which make men enemies instead of brothers and fill the world with strife. It is unrighteousness in its myriad forms which wrecks our lives. Any one who realizes anything of the awfulness of sin and the results of sin will be ready to say with Jeremiah, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"[31] He will not pray this prayer in any cold or heartless fashion. It will be a cry of passionate earnestness from the very depths of his soul, "Deliver us from evil!"

There is a possibility suggested by the translation of our Revised Versions which we have not noticed as yet. They translate, "but deliver us from the evil one," and so make the prayer one for deliverance from the devil. The word in the Greek may be either masculine or neuter. In the Koine, or Common Greek of the New Testament times, the preposition is not at all decisive. In the classical Greek the preposition ἐκ, out of, might have been used more properly with the neuter noun; but in the Common Greek the preposition ἀπό could be used with either the masculine or the neuter.

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[31] Jer. 9. 1.

The Greek Fathers practically were unanimous in making the τοῦ πονηροῦ personal and masculine. The Syriac Versions and the Greek Liturgies adopt the same view. Tertullian and Cyprian preferred to consider the noun neuter, and Augustine followed their lead and his great influence fastened that interpretation upon the Western Church up to the time of the Revisions of 1881. Usually when there is a clear difference of opinion between the Greek Fathers and the Latin Fathers we follow the Greek Fathers without hesitation, and it may be that they are right in this case and the Revisers are right in following their interpretation. It is true that the belief in the personality of the devil was prevalent in the New Testament times and that Jesus and the apostles could have had him in mind when they used this formula of petition. However, we find ourselves inclined to adopt the neuter rendering, as possibly the one in the thought of Jesus and the original disciples and as surely the one which we can pray with most sincerity and faith at the present time.

It is clear, at any rate, that the church of to-day does not know for a certainty what this petition means. There has been a difference of opinion from the time of the Greek Fathers to the present day; and as the Greek Fathers date from two hundred years or so after the time of Jesus not even they can be accepted as final authority in interpretation of what Jesus meant in this instance; and no one ever has been in any better position to decide the question than they. All Christendom, therefore, has been using this formula of petition through the centuries without knowing exactly what they had been told to pray for; and each one who uses it is free to put his own meaning into this masculine or neuter noun.

The scholars always have divided on this issue. Luther prayed, "Deliver us from evil," while Erasmus prayed, "Deliver us from the evil one." Among the more modern scholars those who have preferred the translation of the Greek Fathers and Erasmus include Beza, Adam Clarke, Samuel Davidson, Ebrard, Ellicott, Godet, Keim, Meyer, Olshausen, Parkhurst, Plumptre, Renan, De Wette, Wordsworth, and the majority of the Revisers.

All of these think that Jesus told his disciples to pray for deliverance from the devil, of whom Hugh Latimer said: "The devil is an old enemy, a fellow of great antiquity; he hath endured this five thousand five hundred and fifty-two years, in which space he hath learned all arts and cunnings; he is a great practicer; there is no subtilty but he knoweth the same. Like as an artificer that is cunning and expert in his craft and knoweth how to go to work, how to do his business in the readiest way; so the devil knoweth all ways to tempt us, and to give us an overthrow; insomuch that we can begin nor do nothing, but he is at our heels, and worketh some mischief, whether we be in prosperity or adversity, whether we be in health or sickness, life or death; he knoweth how to use the same for his purpose. . . . Such a fellow is the devil, that old doctor!"[32]

Among the modern authorities who prefer the reading of the Latin Fathers and Luther and the Authorized Version are Dean Alford, Isaac Barrow, Frederick Bleek, Canon Cook,

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[32] Latimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 364, 365.

Ewald, Keil, Lange, Dean Mansel, Stier, and Tholuck. Dean Alford says: "The introduction of the mention of the evil one would here be quite incongruous and even absurd," to which it is retorted by those on the other side of the question that that remark simply makes it evident that Dean Alford, like the others of his school, reads the passage to square with modern ideas, and not with the ideas of the Jews who heard it spoken. Tyndale, Wiclif, and the Geneva Version agreed in the neuter rendering, as did the minority of the Revisers; and this rendering is found in the margin of our Revised Versions to-day.

We prefer to pray, "Deliver us from evil, the evil of sin." We prefer to think that there is only one personal title in this prayer, that of our Father in heaven. We prefer to believe that the last word of the prayer is not the name of the devil. It would add an element of unreality to the prayer to many minds today if there was a recognition of the personality of the devil here, and there are enough difficulties connected with this prayer to confuse and perplex the most conscientious and devout without adding any unnecessary one at this point. Faith in a personal devil was not one of the original doctrines of the Jewish Church, and it is not one of the fundamental or essential doctrines of the Christian Church. The Manichæans believed in two gods, the Good One and the Evil One, and they could pray to the good God, "Deliver us from the Evil One," but a Christian recognizes no divided sovereignty, and it would seem incongruous to him to begin his prayer with the name of the good Father and to close it with the name of the bad devil. It would grieve many good people to find a false faith in the climax of what they have considered a brief and universal symbol of Christianity.

On the other hand, a petition for salvation from sin is a real climax in the prayer and is fitted for universal use. It arouses no questions in any mind, and makes a comprehensive close to a pattern for all prayers. Therefore, since grammar does not settle the issue and the theology of the New Testament times need not settle it, we much prefer to conclude that Jesus intended the disciples to pray for deliverance from the evil within themselves, the evil of conscious and responsible sin.

IV. *Deliverance.* The disciples of Jesus cannot pray for deliverance from all evils. That is impossible in our present existence. Pain and misfortune are sure to come to all, and we are not to pray for deliverance from all such things, since suffering may be a blessing, and calamity may be a school of character, and privations may teach us the secrets of spiritual power, and temporal defeats may lead to eternal victories. To escape from pain and loss is not our lot in life, and it is not our aim in life. God has not promised to deliver us from these things, but he has promised not to desert us in them.

As long as we are in this world we shall be in contact with its evil. As long as there are dogs and swine to be dealt with, and motes and beams to be extracted, and false prophets to be judged, and persecutors and enemies to be loved and prayed for, this will seem to the saints of God like an evil world in which to live. Their consolation is that despite the utmost effort of all opposing powers God can make their utmost malice work together for our good. God can convert the things intended to hurt us into things which help us instead. He can turn their poison into medicine, and make every heavy dose of trials only serve as a tonic to the sturdily striving soul. It may be true that evils are on every hand and that temptations never cease. It may be true that for every holy thought we have there comes another calculated to destroy it. It may be true that for every time we hallow God's name we see an opportunity to disgrace it. It may be true that every time we do anything to bring in the kingdom of God we find ourselves tempted to do something to hinder its dominion on earth. It may be true that every time we do the will of God we think of a thousand ways to do our own will instead. It may be that we dwell in a land clamorous with hunger and thirst, filled with debtors refusing to pay even while they pile up greater debts. It may be that even when we go to church we find a devil's advocate in the pulpit. It may be that there is no hope that we ever shall be saved from these things; but there is one thing from which we can pray to be saved even now, and that is personal sin. We can pray, "Our Father, deliver us from fretfulness and rebellion and unbelief."

There is a lesson for us in that answer of the three Hebrew children, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."[33] The children of the Father in heaven may not be delivered from fiery furnaces now, but they can be delivered and many of them are delivered now from all fear and all rebellion and all distrust. They are saved, not from temptations and trials, but from sin. That is a great deliverance. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "The Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from evil."[34] Then in the last of his Epistles he summed up his experience and hope in these words, "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me; . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."[35] His prayer for deliverance from evil had had complete answer.

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[33] Dan. 3. 17, 18.

What was true of him may be true of all who follow Christ. They may not be spared the discipline of suffering, but, like their Master, they may be saved from sin. Does it seem to anyone that it is too great a thing to ask of God that we may be fully saved from sin? The answer to all hesitation at this point is that the work is not of ourselves. It is of God; and what is impossible with man is possible with him. Jesus said to the Father, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."[36] His prayer was not in vain. It can be answered and it has been answered for multitudes of the saints.

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[34] 2 Thess. 3. 3.

[35] 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.

Does it seem too great a boon to ask? Remember what Tyndale said, "Seeing the God of all mercy, who knows thine infirmities, commands thee to pray in all temptation and adversity, and has promised to help, if thou trust in him, what excuse is it to say, when thou hast sinned, 'I could not stand of myself,' when his power was ready to help thee, if thou hadst asked." We have a Saviour from sin, and it was promised that his name should be called Jesus because he was to save his people from their sins. Some people never will forgive him for that. If he would save them from the guilt of their sins, or, better still, from the punishment of their sins, they gladly would accept him as a Saviour; but if he insists upon saving them from the sins themselves, their favorite, darling, besetting sins, they will have none of him. Yet that is just what he came to do; and his people are saved from their sins.

A Christian is one who is saved from all willful sin. Those who are not so saved are not Christians, but sinners. All Christians desire above all things to hallow the name of the Father and to do his will. They ask for bread and for pardon and for the coming of the Kingdom; but these petitions are not sufficient to meet all their present need. With surroundings of evil they will be satisfied with nothing less than complete salvation from sin. Their last and climaxing cry to their God will be for Christian perfection, to be made holy even as he is holy, to be delivered from all evil within. It is a prayer to be answered with some agony, it may be, such as the cutting off of a right hand or the plucking out of a right eye, but a prayer to be answered with great spiritual victory here and eternal triumph hereafter.

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[36] John 17. 15.

Let no one pray this prayer who does not desire to be quite free from all sin. It is the prayer of a hypocrite if it is prayed by one who desires anything less than that. Jesus stands before each disciple and says, "Wilt thou be made whole?" and if the would-be disciple says in his heart, "I would like to be made partly whole and almost altogether whole; but there is this one little indulgence I do not care to give up, there is this one form of self-will and sin with which I am not ready to part," let him no longer pray this prayer. It will be a vain repetition upon his lips. The man who dallies with temptation and tampers with sin has no business with this prayer. It is for the use of those who detest all sin as contrary to God's will and who desire earnestly to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

The man who prays this prayer will not court danger, but shun it. His courage will be shown not in skirting the edge of the precipice with the multitude which goes to do evil, but in treading alone if need be the steep and narrow path. No man can pray this prayer with sincerity and then venture into doubtful places and associate with questionable companions and expose himself unnecessarily to occasions of sin. If he really means what he prays, he will watch as well as pray. He will strive and agonize and fight and toil and endure to the end. He that endureth to the end shall be saved, delivered from all evil for evermore. Jacob was an old and feeble man when he said, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life," but when he came to bless the sons of Joseph he said, "The angel who hath delivered me from all evil, bless the lads."[37] There had been evils all his life long; there was complete deliverance at the end.

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[37] Gen. 48. 16.

We remind ourselves again and for the last time now that the pronoun is plural in all these petitions. We pray, "Deliver *us* from the evil." We pray that all our brothers as well as ourselves may be saved from sin. Here is a poor woman up in a garret who is struggling against great odds to keep her virtue and yet to earn her daily bread and she is tempted to doubt the goodness of God and the heavenly Father's love and care: and from the depths of her despair she prays, "Deliver *us* from evil," and in so doing she prays for all who are tempted and doubting and despairing like herself. She prays for that college student of whom she never has heard, but who in his half-way stage of culture has met with questions which perplex him beyond measure and lead him to doubt even the existence of a God. She prays for that grasping war-profiteer whose dealings with individual men and with great corporations and with cynical and selfish governments have hardened his heart more and more until now he seriously contemplates the possibility that there is no such thing as disinterested goodness anywhere in the universe. She prays for him, though he stands at the other extreme of the social scale and his palace is as far removed from her garret as his ideals are removed from those which move her to make her petition. She prays for all who need deliverance.

We all pray for each other when we pray this prayer; and it is perfectly evident that the one who prays a social prayer of this sort has his duty set out before him by the very fact of his praying. His first duty is to see to it that he himself is saved from sin. Then his second duty is to see that as many of his brethren as he may be able to influence and to reach are saved from sin. Then his duty and their duty is to work as well as pray for the removal of all possible evil from the world. Faith and works must go together here as everywhere. The man who prays this prayer in sincerity will be a philanthropist, doing what may be done to prevent calamities and to relieve suffering, to reform abuses in society and in government, to educate the ignorant and to reclaim the fallen, to heal the sick and to care for the dependent, to cast out all the devils of selfishness and cruelty and war and to make this earth a place of righteousness and peace forever. It is a prayer for political and social and economic and ecclesiastical reformation and regeneration and thoroughgoing purification. The man who prays this prayer in faith for himself and his fellowman will not sit and sigh over the evils of his environment; he will go out like a valiant warrior to fight for their abolition and he will fight in the faith that there will be ultimate victory. His God will be with him and he will be a conqueror.

The final triumph may not come in his day, but it assuredly is on the way; and he goes forth with rejoicing to meet it. This petition looks toward the future, and takes the glory which is to be into its vision as well as the personal victory in the present. That petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," has to do only with present need. The petition, "Forgive us our trespasses," takes all the guilty past within its scope and asks that God will blot out all our past transgressions for his mercy's sake. This petition, "Deliver us from evil," glances at the past, prays for the present, and then reaches forward to the future too. This day, yesterday, and the great to-morrow are all covered in these prayers.

The last petition is the eschatological petition. It looks toward the last things and in the personal victory of the present it finds the assurance of the universal triumph of the Kingdom in the end. We pray in faith that millennial conditions will at last prevail, that there is a good time coming when the church will be a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish in the sight of its Lord; when all the prayers of all the saints will have been answered at last in the perfect blessedness of those who walk in the ways of their Lord; when there shall be no more preventable disease or poverty, no more selfishness and avarice and sacrifice of human life in war; when the New Jerusalem shall come down from the skies and establish itself here among men; when the name of God shall be hallowed and the kingdom of God shall come and the will of God shall be done here upon the earth as it is done in heaven. We pray in faith that there will be final and universal victory.

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Shall be the final end of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood;

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."[38]

Having prayed this prayer in faith, there is nothing else to ask for. We have reached the climax of all petition. It is the climax of salvation, complete deliverance from sin. It comes at the end of this list of petitions because it is one of the last which any man learns to pray with all sincerity and with all faith. It represents the permanent and all-comprehensive purpose and prayer of the believer, and it is answered in present fullness of salvation as it will be answered in millennial conditions upon the earth and then in the final deliverance of heaven, where God's children hope to be delivered from all evil within which might prompt to sin. There before the throne their song shall be, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

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[38] Tennyson, "In Memoriam," liv.

PART NINE

DOXOLOGY AND AMEN

PART NINE

DOXOLOGY AND AMEN

No one knows who first added the doxology to the Disciples' Prayer. It is generally believed that Jesus did not do it. He suggested these prayers for his disciples' use, and then left the way open for them to add whatever they thought best or whatever the special occasion might suggest. Perhaps Jesus intended to hint to them that praying never was done, never was complete, never was to cease. At any rate, this prayer as it came from his lips is unfinished. Some pious soul thought good to add a formula for finishing it. He may have taken it from the prayer which David offered after he had made his preparation for building the temple, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, *and the power, and the glory,* and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; *thine is the kingdom,* O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all."[1] David here uses the three terms, "Kingdom, power, glory," and some one may have thought they would make a good and suitable termination to these petitions. The church has agreed with his judgment and through the centuries has repeated his words along with the words of Jesus, making no distinction between them, and feeling that the doxology was just as appropriate as any of the preceding petitions.

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[1] 1 Chron. 29. 11.

Of course multitudes in the church have supposed that the doxology was given by Jesus and therefore it was to them just as certainly and fully inspired as any other part of the prayer. However, it is not found in the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, or in Codex Beza. The Codices Alexandrinus and Ephræmi Rescriptus are mutilated at this point and cannot be cited as authorities in this matter. The doxology is omitted in the Old Latin and the Vulgate and the Coptic Versions. It seems to have been unknown to Jerome and the Latin Fathers. Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine wrote commentaries on the prayer and made no mention of any doxology. The textual critics, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Lachmann, Alford, Westcott and Hort, and others think that the doxology was interpolated at some early date from liturgical use, and therefore they omitted it from their texts and it has been banished to the margin in our Revised Versions.

With the omission of "the kingdom" the doxology is found in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,* which may date from the first Christian century. It is in the oldest Syriac Version which may date from the second century, and in the later Syriac, Ethiopic, Gothic, Armenian, and Slavonic Versions. Chrysostom found it in his text and commented upon it, as also did Isidore of Pelusium. Whether the doxology was original with Jesus or was added later by the church, it is a fit conclusion to the prayer, and in all probability the church never will consent to its omission from its liturgy. It is too beautiful and too appropriate. Even in English "there is music in its stately cadences, which rise in succession like the solemn strains of a triumphal march, to the final Amen."[2] It can be neither rivaled nor surpassed as an affirmation of faith or a termination of petitioning. Stier, in his *Leben Jesu,* said, "If there is anywhere an internal criticism which may maintain its prerogative over the external testimonies of the manuscripts, it is in this place." This seems to be the judgment of the general church. It never will be willing to end the pattern prayer with the word "evil" and much less with the word "devil."

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[2] Burgess, *Our Father*, p. 268.

Having been reminded in these petitions how difficult it is for many of God's children to get their daily bread, and how impossible it is for us to forgive ourselves and how next to impossible it sometimes seems for us to forgive others, how temptations beset us on every hand and evils throng upon us at every step, the church cannot stop there in the contemplation of its own weaknesses and miseries. From the very beginning it has felt impelled to lift its eyes and its heart again to the contemplation of the divine perfections and to be comforted in the thought of the glory of God's name and the power of his will and the majesty of his kingdom. God rules, and God is Almighty; and that is the reason for our praying and that is the assurance of our faith. He can grant our requests, and the glory of the answer will be his.

That little word "for" is an argument, "*For* thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. Amen." Our faith plants itself on that "for" as on the everlasting rock. It is as immovable as God's throne. We plead God's power in our behalf. His glory is at stake. His faithfulness is pledged to hear and answer our prayer. Like Joshua we plead, "What wilt thou do *for thy great name?*[3] Like

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[3] Josh. 7. 9.

Daniel we say, "We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but *for thy great mercies.* O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, *for thine own sake,* O my God, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."[4] Like Jeremiah we cry, "Do thou it *for thy name's sake,* O Lord. . . O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble. . . . thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and *we are called by thy name;* leave us not."[5] It was the prayer of Jesus, "Father, *glorify thy name.*"[6]

It has been the prayer of the church through the centuries past as it will be the prayer of the church in all time to come, "Father, grant us these petitions, for thou hast the power and it will be to thy glory and thy kingdom will come and will be established in this way." The Kingdom belongs to the Father by right. He controls it all now except that portion which is represented by the rebellious wills of men. We pray that the Kingdom may come to all of these; and then when all rule and authority and power has been subjected unto him our faith is that the Kingdom will be his in fact. Goodness alone is eternal. The wages of sin is death, and when all wickedness has perished from the face of the earth and from the hearts of men, God will be all in all for evermore. It is the will of God that all men shall be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; and as the leper came to Jesus saying, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," we come to the Father saying: "This is thy will, to win all men to thyself; and what thou willest, thou canst do. We wait in faith for the accomplishment of thy will in due time."

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[4] Dan. 9. 18, 19.

[5] Jer. 14. 7-9.

[6] John 12. 28.

This doxology represents the final triumph of our faith. "What we ask, it is of thy royal largess to bestow, for thine is the kingdom. What we ask, thou art able and more than able to give, for thine is the power. What we ask is all to thine honor, for thine is the glory for ever. We look forward to the time when all darkness of ignorance and illusion and sin shall have disappeared and thy eternal glory shall be ushered in, when thy name is hallowed by all and thy kingdom has come and thy will has been accepted and established and recognized everywhere, and all our temporal wants have been supplied, and all our sins have been forgiven, and all our temptations are past, and all evil has come to an end; and in that day of our eternal deliverance every one of these petitions will have found complete accomplishment, and this doxology will be all which is left of this prayer for our repetition in heaven. With all the hosts before the throne we shall sing, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever."

It will be our song of praise for our final deliverance. From what and from whom? Sir Richard Baker says, "From hell, from the grave, from the world, from our enemies, from our friends, from ourselves; but above all, from one that makes use of all these against us, from the bramble Satan who catcheth hold of us to rule over us, but thou, O Lord, art the true olive tree, and thine is the kingdom; from the roaring lion that goes about to devour us, but thou art the lion of the tribe of Judah and thine is the power; from the cruel Pharaoh that pursues to destroy us, but thou art the Lord of hosts that gettest the honor upon Pharaoh's host, and thine is the glory; and for this deliverance from Pharaoh and his host, though but a type of ours, Moses long since sang a song so loud that it hath echoed from him to David and from David to Isaiah and from Isaiah has come to us, Thou, O Lord, art our strength, and our song, for thou hast been our deliverance (Ex. 15. 2; Psa. 118. 14; Isa. 12. 2)."[7]

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[7] Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

There is a solemn word with which we close this prayer and all our prayers, to which we ought to give brief attention before closing this study—the word "Amen." Martin Luther thought that this prayer was the greatest martyr on earth because it was said so often with so little thought and feeling, and with so little reverence and faith. Probably that is as true of this closing word as of any other portion of the prayer. How much thought and feeling, reverence and faith do most people put into the utterance of this word? If we should ask them what it means, some would answer: "It means that we are through. We have come to the end of our petitions. We have finished our prayer. It is like the period at the end of the sentence. It marks the fact that we have come to a full stop. It is like that other word 'finis' or its English equivalent, 'the end.' "

There are many people to whom no service in a Christian church ever seems complete without a benediction and to whom no prayer ever seems complete without an "Amen" at the end of it. They use the word simply as a notification to the Deity and to the congregation that their petition ends here. Now, it is a rather noteworthy fact that in many of the New Testament Epistles the benediction comes at the beginning rather than at the end, and it is also an interesting fact that in the discourses of Jesus the double "Amen" frequently comes at the beginning of the sentence rather than at the close either of the sentence or the speech. Evidently, the New Testament use of the word, then, signifies something more than a convenient formula for finishing a prayer or anything else.

Most people know that the word is a Hebrew word which we have adopted bodily in our English speech. Most people do not know that in our New Testament the word is sometimes translated by "verily, verily," where in the original we have the double "amen, amen," while in other places it is left untranslated and is simply transferred from the Hebrew and the Greek into the equivalent English form. In our Bible the word is usually an adverb, meaning, "certainly, truly," but it is sometimes an adjective and sometimes a noun. It is derived from a Hebrew verb which means, actively, "to support" and passively, "to be a support, to be stable, to be faithful, trustworthy, sure, to be reliable," and it is used both of persons and things upon which one can lean with a sense of security. It is applied to the word of men and the word of God to signify confidence in their truth. It was used from the beginning by the Hebrew people as a congregational response; and it was sometimes a ratificatory supplication, "So be it," and sometimes a ratificatory affirmation, "So it is."

In the wilderness wandering when the priest announced the test for the wife accused of unfaithfulness she was required to say at the end of his speech, "Amen, amen."[8] When the curses were pronounced upon Mount Ebal by the Levites, at the end of each curse all the people answered and said, "Amen."[9] David brought the ark to Jerusalem and had a service of praise, and Asaph and his brethren sang a psalm of thanksgiving, and then "all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord."[10] David was about to die and he called Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the warrior and told them to make Solomon king in his stead, and Benaiah answered, "Amen: the Lord, God of the lord my king, say so too."[11]

The first book of the Psalms ends, "Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen."[12] The second book of the Psalms ends, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen."[13] The third book of the Psalms ends, "Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen."[14] The fourth book of the Psalms ends, "Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. And let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord."[15]

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[8] Num. 5. 22.

[9] Deut. 27. 15-26.

[10] 1 Chron. 16. 36.

[11] 1 Kings 1. 36.

[12] Psa. 41. 13.

After the return from captivity Ezra the priest opened the book of the law before the people and blessed the Lord, the great God, "and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground."[16] During the captivity Hananiah had prophesied falsely concerning a restoration, and Jeremiah had answered him, "Amen: the Lord do so; the Lord perform thy words which thou hast prophesied."[17] He wished that the prophecy might be a true one, but it was revealed to him later that it was not.

The word "Amen" was frequently upon the lips of Jesus. He used it one hundred and three times in the records of our Gospels. In the fourth Gospel alone he says "Verily, verily," that is, "Amen, amen," some twenty-five times. The New Testament church took over the practice of the congregational response with an "Amen," especially to an ascription of praise or the giving of thanks. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians we read, "How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks if he does not know what thou sayest?"[18] Twice in the Epistle to the Romans Paul blesses God and then adds, "Amen."[19] Twice in the same Epistle he ascribes glory to God and then adds, "Amen."[20] We find these "Amens" scattered through his other Epistles.[21] Twice Paul appends an "Amen" to a benediction.[22]

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[13] Psa. 72. 18, 19.

[14] Psa. 89. 52.

[15] Psa. 106. 48.

[16] Neh. 8. 6.

[17] Jer. 28. 6.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews closes his benediction with "Amen,"[23] and then after adding a few sentences he closes his Epistle with the same word.[24] In the Apocalypse John heard every created thing praising God, and the four living creatures about the throne said, "Amen."[25] Again John had a vision of the great multitudes of heaven praising the Lord God, the Almighty, "and the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah."[26] John closed the book of the Apocalypse with these words, "He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen."[27]

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[18] 1 Cor. 14. 16.

[19] Rom. 1. 25; 9. 5.

[20] Rom. 11. 36; 16. 27.

[21] Gal. 1. 5. Eph. 3. 21. Phil. 4. 20. [1 Tim. 1. 17; 6. 16. 2 Tim. 4. 18.

[22] 1 Cor. 16. 24. Gal. 6. 18.

[23] Heb. 13. 21.

[24] Heb. 13. 25.

As the last word of the Apocalypse the word "Amen" becomes the last word in our Bible; but a still higher honor is given it in this book of the Apocalypse when John makes it a proper noun and the name of the risen Christ, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness."[28] This is simply an appropriation to Jesus of the name given by the Old Testament prophet to God, "He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of the Amen; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of the Amen."[29]

It was perfectly proper to make this appropriation, because, as Paul said, "All the promises of God in him have their Yea and through him their Amen, unto the glory of God through us."[30] Jesus is the affirmation of the truth and the reality of God. Our Amen is the affirmation of the truth and the reality of our prayer. In the Apocalypse the angels standing round about the throne begin and end their ascription of praise to God with this word, "Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen."[31]

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[25] Rev. 5. 14.

[26] Rev. 19. 4.

[27] Rev. 22. 20, 21.

[28] Rev. 3. 14.

[29] Isa. 65. 16.

There was plenty of precedent both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament for the church's addition of a doxology closing with an "Amen" after the petitions of the pattern prayer. As a form of congregational response the "Amen" became characteristic of the Christian assemblies. Justin Martyr tells us that at the celebration of the Eucharist when the president had finished his prayer and thanksgiving, "all the people with one acclamation say, Amen."[32] The Christian poet Prudentius sang of the peoples' "Amen" as resounding through the sky. *"Et resonaturus ferit aethera vocibus Amen."* Jerome tells us that in his day, "at the end of every public utterance of prayer and praise, the 'Amen' of the people sounded like the loud murmur of the sea, or the voice of thunder, while the hollow idols, and their temples that were empty, did echo and rebound the churches' 'Amen' so that their fabrics shaked."

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[30] 2 Cor. 1. 20.

[31] Rev. 7. 12.

[32] Justin Martyr, *Apology*, ii. 85.

The sentence of the proconsul condemning Cyprian to death because he was a Christian had been read in a loud voice, "Thascius Cyprian is to be put to death by the sword," and then Cyprian lifted up his voice and said in just as loud a tone, "Amen." It was the challenge of his faith to the worst they could do against him. It expressed the triumph of his faith over all tribulation and anguish and persecution and famine and nakedness and peril and sword. If it was God's will that he should suffer—Amen! He was more than conqueror in all these things.

One of the Puritan writers says, "When we set our seal on the truth of God and say 'Amen,' it is a word that fills earth and heaven; there is not a joyfuller word in the world than when whole congregations say and shout 'Amen.' "[33] Another Puritan writer declared: "The united breath of God's people sends a blast upon their enemies; the trumpet blew, and the people shouted, and Jericho fell down to the ground. If any single soul pray in faith, it shall be heard; much more if two have a symphony (as the word imports) they shall be answered: how much more when the whole congregation is in harmony, and unanimously cries 'Amen'! God will say 'Amen' to such 'Amens.'" In the congregational repetition of the pattern prayer the "Amen" at the end sums up all of the petitions and affirms the reality and sincerity of each one and of all of them together. It is nothing but a vain repetition and a hollow mockery and worth no more than sounding brass and clanging cymbals unless that meaning be put into it.

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[33] Sibbs, 1632.

As the Puritan writer from whom we last quoted has said of the "Amen," "It winds up all together in one bundle. Many are willing to have God forgive their trespasses, but cannot so readily forgive others; we may be free for God to give us daily bounty and bread, but cannot make it as meat and drink to do his will. Men will easily accept of God's kindness—not so roundly pay off their tribute of praises. Such cannot roundly pray, nor say Amen. 'O Lord! and Amen'! are two long prayers in few words, managed by the whole soul; and so it is an 'Amen' with a Hallelujah."[34] Then it is not a word to be spoken lightly but reverently, fervently, and in the fear of God. It is one of the most solemn words which a man can utter. It is his response to all the truth and the reality there is in God. It is his affirmation of his faith in God and the sense of his own need and the assurance that in whole-hearted surrender to God the Father he, God's child, means all that he says in his prayer and expects to have all that he asks in due time. It renews and pledges allegiance to God. It affirms the whole of our Christian faith.

It has come down to us from the Jewish tabernacle and temple and synagogue. It has been in use among the chosen people from the beginning until now. It was upon the lips of the Master and the primitive apostles and confessors of the Christian Church. It has been heard through the Christian centuries, and when we use it now it binds us to the succession of the Christian martyrs and saints of all the past. It has been carried into all the tongues of the earth and is repeated to-day among all the races of men. It will be caught up by increasing multitudes in the ages to come, until at last all creation shall join in the angels' song, "Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen."

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[34] Woodcock, Morning Exercises, 1682.

Shall we not use this word "Amen" more thoughtfully in the future than in the past? It affirms the reality of our doxology and of our prayers. "He that retains one rebel-lust out of God's obedience doth mock him when he repeats these words, 'Thine is the kingdom.' He that cannot rely upon God for all that is necessary, both for this life and for that which is to come, reproaches him when he says, 'For thine is the power.' He that can impute any good thing to himself as his own acquisition can never be thought in earnest when he says, 'Thine is the glory.'"[35] That means that no one can say this prayer and the "Amen" to this prayer in all sincerity who is not entirely consecrated. Those who fail in any degree of consecration and faith need not busy themselves with the repetition of these words. Therefore, shall we not join in the prayer of the hymn,

> "Only, O Lord, in thy dear love
> Fit us for perfect rest above;
> And help us this, and every day,
> To live more nearly as we pray"?

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[35] Denton, *A Commentary on The Lord's Prayer*, pp. 175, 176.

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